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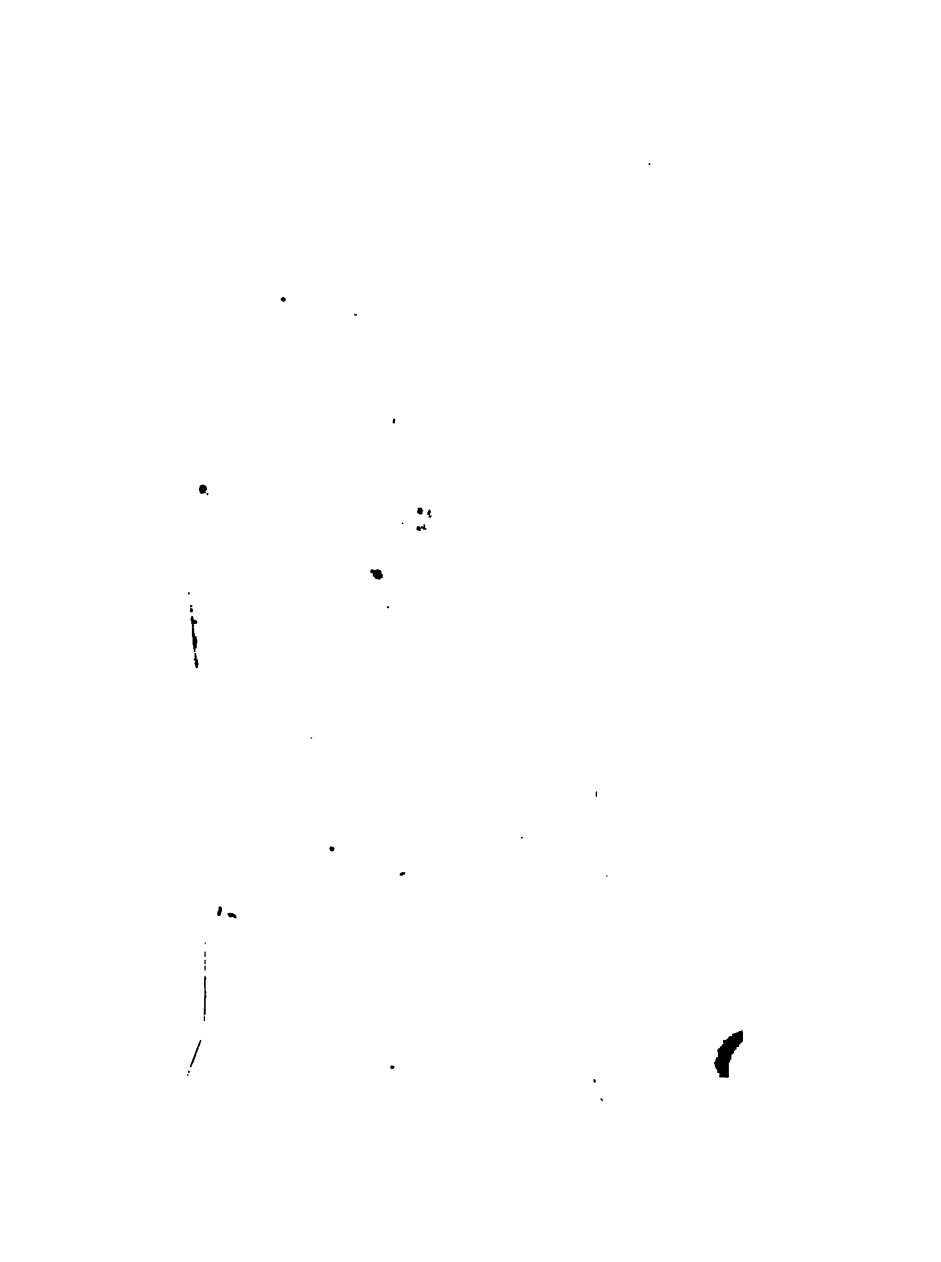
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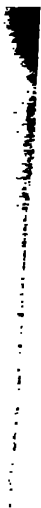


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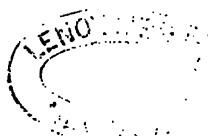


A
HELP
TO
THE GOSPELS :
CONTAINING
A HARMONY, EXERCISES, ILLUSTRATIONS,
AND
Practical Lessons,
FROM
THE HISTORY AND MIRACLES
CONTAINED IN
THE FOUR GOSPELS ;
C DIVIDED
INTO FIFTY-FOUR SECTIONS, TO CORRESPOND
WITH THE
HARMONY TICKETS
USED
In Families and Sabbath Schools. 3

THIRTEENTH EDITION.

EDINBURGH :
Published
By JAMES GALL,
AT THE SCOTTISH SABBATH SCHOOL AND TRACT
DEPOSITORY, 24 NIDDRY STREET.

1879.



HARMONY OF THE FOUR GOSPELS, AS Laid Down and Illustrated IN THE HELP TO THE GOSPELS.

The Texts inclosed within parentheses in the *Intermediate*
Passages are parallels to each other.

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PREFACE.

THE success which has attended the teaching of the following little Work, has exceeded the expectations of its Author. It was evident, long before it was undertaken, that some radical change in the method of teaching children the knowledge of the Scriptures was absolutely necessary, in order to counteract the pernicious influence of that system which was then universally prevalent;—namely, of making the children learn divine truth by mere *rote*, without paying any regard to their understanding what was learned,—a system in which, it may truly be said, in the words of the late Dr Brown, that the children “were bewildered with verbal mysteries, where there was no refreshment of truth to the eye, that was wearied with wandering only from shadow to shadow; and where there was all the fatigue of continual progress, without the advance of a single step” in real knowledge. The consequence of which was, that this shadowy,

or verbal knowledge, being altogether without solidity or foundation, was in a short time entirely dissipated from the mind, and the individual was not only left destitute of correct ideas, but, what was still worse, rendered in a great measure incapable of acquiring them.

It appeared to the Author, that could a plan be devised which would both make the child understand the meaning of his exercises, and also enable him to acquire the skill of searching for himself, and digesting divine truth, the above evils would not only be remedied by it, but that it would be a great acquisition to those engaged in religious instruction. The plan here adopted was recommended, tried, and succeeded beyond expectation ; and in this way, the idea of a **HELP** to the **GOSPELS**, for the benefit of the Christian public, at first originated. Although the Author was, from the first, convinced of the decided advantage of this plan, both in interesting and in benefiting the children, yet he scarcely hoped, that the deeply rooted prejudices of many, in favour of the repeating system, would have yielded so readily to the voice of reason and experience, and that its adoption would have been so rapid and so general in Scotland.

Before proceeding to make some special observations, in reference to the advantages of the **HELP** to families and schools, it may be proper to remark in general, that the *Exercises* and *Explanations* are intended to answer the first part of the plan ;—namely, to make the children perceive clearly the meaning of the ideas contained in what they are taught, and thus fix the truths permanently upon their minds: And that the *Lessons* are designed to answer the second part of the plan ;—namely, to initiate children into the practice of digging for themselves in the mine of divine truth, and thus enable them, in all their after life, to extract and treasure up the ideas of every subject which they may either read or hear. The author would earnestly recommend to all parents and teachers, to keep these two things distinctly in view, and steadily to pursue them both, in order that the education of the children may be complete and efficacious.

The period which has elapsed since the publication of the first part of the **HELP**, has suggested some important hints for its successful adoption both in Families and Schools, to which the author begs leave now shortly to advert.

USE IN A CHRISTIAN FAMILY.

In the important duty of Family Instruction, the Help to the Gospels will be of great value. By adopting the order of reading the Evangelists, which is pointed out in the *Narrative* part of each section, the head of a family will, by turning up and reading the passages referred to, be able to follow our Lord's history, miracles, discourses, and parables, in the order in which they occurred ; and thus both his family and servants will, by comparing the several accounts together, as directed in the Harmony, acquire such an enlightened and consistent view of the insulated records of the Evangelists as cannot easily be obtained in any other way ; but which, when obtained, will doubtless be both interesting and advantageous.

The *Exercises*, *Explanations*, but particularly the *Practical Lessons*, will afford a pleasant and highly beneficial employment for the family circle on the Sabbath evenings, as well as the children of the Sabbath School. To go through the course of exercises here marked out, will elicit the mental strength, and enlarge the capacities of all ; besides keeping alive the attention of the young as well as the farther ad-

vanced, and augmenting their religious knowledge in a degree both rapid and certain.

The listlessness and want of interest which too often prevail on the Sabbath evening, may uniformly be traced to the *absence* of all plan in the conduct of the exercise, or to the *sameness* of the questions, which have been travelled over so often, until they have become, as it were, quite uninteresting,—a circumstance which must inevitably happen, where a great surface of divine truth is gone over at each time. Now the **HELP** will, by its regularity of method, and the ever-varying nature of its exercises, remedy entirely all these evils, and convert the family circle into what may not improperly be called an intellectual and moral manufactory of religious knowledge, where each member will be busily employed in his respective department, preparing the materials of divine truth presented in the Bible for present and future use.

But farther, this exercise will be easier and more instructive to the parent himself, than the common practice of general questions. If the parent wishes to rear a solid fabric of knowledge in his family, he must proceed, step by step, laying securely each addition. Now it is plain that, in order to do this, he

must canvass fully each subject that comes before him, which can only be done by the method here recommended. For if he does not confine himself to a particular subject for the night, but ranges over a general surface, he will soon find his stock of questions exhausted, his children's attention become languid, and their ideas at best but vague and indefinite ; whereas, the discussion of a section of the *HELP*, in the manner there delineated, will, by affording a new stock of questions each night, both enrich his own mind, and benefit those of his children. The gradual illumination that will take place in the minds of father and children, will give an increased and increasing capacity of perceiving, tracing, and applying to their several cases, the *Practical Lessons* which occur on every passage of Scripture brought under review ; and if these, in answer to prayer, be sealed upon the heart by the influences of the Holy Spirit, both teacher and taught will have cause to rejoice.

USES IN THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

The *EXERCISE*, the *EXPLANATIONS*, and the *LESSONS* should, in the Sabbath School, be

gone over separately, one after another. It is not intended that the *whole* section be previously committed to memory by the children ; as experience has shewn, that, after a few months training, the children retain so tenaciously the verses upon which they have been *catechized* and *cross questioned*, as to be able to repeat, at the close of the exercise, the whole section in their own words. This should frequently be tried by the teacher, and is perhaps one of the best evidences of the progress of a child in mental capacity and culture, and should give rise to a well grounded hope, and a pleasing anticipation of a rich harvest of grace and holiness. The children, however, should always be strictly enjoined to read over, and carefully study the whole section at home.

The EXERCISE and the EXPLANATIONS require no further notice ; but the Author would earnestly impress on the mind of every teacher the importance of that part of his duty, which consists in *teaching the children to apply the Scriptures to their own case, by deducing PRACTICAL LESSONS from the verses*. This is the very essence of Bible instruction. To *teach a child lessons*, let it be observed, is not so valuable as to teach him how to *draw out lessons* for

himself; just as it is not so important an acquisition for a child to be taught to *repeat*, as to be taught to *read* a chapter for himself. In the one case, he is put in possession of *one* chapter only, while, in the other, the whole word of God is laid open to his enquiries. Let the teacher then train the child to *observe* how the lesson is connected with, and deduced from the verse; and being once able to trace this connection, he will soon acquire the power of drawing lessons from almost every subject to which his attention may be directed. The advantages of such an acquisition will be invaluable.

Some may perhaps think that the lessons are too numerous. The Author shall make no apology for this. He was anxious to furnish teachers and parents with as ample materials as possible, leaving it to them to make a selection from the number, according to their judgment and pleasure. Those who are most successful in tracing the derivation of the lessons from the subject, are least likely to complain of their number; though it will not only be proper, but even necessary, that the teacher confine himself at first to two or three lessons only, until the capacities of the children expand.

HELP TO THE GOSPELS.

The questions in the Exercises printed in Italics, correspond to those on the Harmony Tickets.

SECTION I.

John the Baptist's Birth foretold.—Luke i. 5—23.

NARRATIVE.

AT the time when Herod was king of Judea, there lived in the hill country of that kingdom, a man named Zacharias, and his wife Elizabeth, both of whom were old and without children. He was a priest; and one day as he was burning incense in the temple, in his turn, an angel appeared to him, and told him that he was to have a son, who was to be the forerunner of the Messiah, and his name was to be John. Zacharias, doubting the truth of what the angel told him, requested a sign; which sign the angel gave him, by striking him deaf and dumb; letting him know, that he should remain so till the whole of what he had predicted should be fulfilled. Zacharias waited still in Jerusalem till the days of his ministration were ended, and then went to his own house.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 5. When did these things happen? What was Zacharias? What was his wife? What was her name?—6. What kind of people were they? Before whom were they righteous? In what did they walk?—7. What family had they? What is said as to their age?—8, 9. Where did he exercise the priest's office? What did he do in the temple?—10. Who were without the temple? What

were they doing?—11. What did Zacharias see? Where did he see him?—12. What is said of Zacharias when he saw him?—13. What did the angel say to compose his mind? What did he say was heard? *What was he to receive?* What was to be his name?—14. What were he and the people to rejoice at?—15. In whose sight was he to be great? What instructions did he receive concerning his drink? What was he to be filled with?—16. *What was he to do to the children of Israel?*—17. In whose power and spirit was he to come? Whose heart was he to turn? To what was he to turn the disobedient? What was he to make ready?—18. What did Zacharias ask the angel?—19. What did the angel say of himself? For what purpose was he sent?—20. *What sign was to be given to Zacharias?* Till when was he to be dumb? Why was he struck dumb?—21. Who were waiting for Zacharias? What were they doing while Zacharias was in the temple? (*See verse 10.*) At what did they marvel?—22. From whence did Zacharias come out? What did the people think?—What made them think this?—23. Where did Zacharias go? When did he go there?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 5. *Course of Abia*, or Abijah; A division, or certain number of priests, who took their turn in ministering in the temple, eight days at a time. See 1 Chron. xxiv. 10, 19.

6. *Righteous before God*; Not in the sight of men only, but before God, who looks into the heart.—*Ordinances*, Services, and duties appointed by God.

7. *Well stricken in years*, Very old.

8. *Order of his course*, When it came to his turn.

9. *His lot was to burn incense*.—Incense was burnt on the golden altar, before the veil in the holy place, every morning and evening.—As there was a number of priests in the division, or course, they cast lots among themselves, who should perform particular duties.—See Exod. xxx. 1—10.

10. *Praying without*, In the courts of the temple.

12. *Fear fell upon him*, He was greatly afraid.

15. *He shall be great in the sight of the Lord*, Though mean in the estimation of men, he shall be eminent in the sight of God, for his wisdom, piety, and usefulness to his fellow men.—*He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb*, The work of the Spirit of God in changing his heart, and renewing his corrupt nature, should be evident even from his childhood.

16. *Turn to the Lord, their God*, Shall be the honoured instrument of their conversion.

17. *He shall go before him, viz. The Messiah, the Saviour*, who was about to be born.—*In the spirit and power of Elias, or Elijah* ; With such piety, zeal, fortitude, perseverance, and self-denial, as did Elijah, when he was upon earth.—*To turn the heart of the fathers to, or with the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just*, He would successfully call the attention of persons of every age and condition, from the pleasures and the cares, and the follies of life, to repent of their sins, and consider their real condition before God ; and thus lead them to consider the wisdom about to be exhibited and taught by the Just One, now about to come.—*A people prepared for the Lord*, A people prepared by humiliation and true repentance, for receiving the message of salvation brought to them by the Lord the Redeemer.

19. *I am Gabriel*, (See Dan. viii. 16. ix. 21.)—*Glad tidings*, Good news.

20. *Fulfilled in their season*, Done as I have said, when the time comes.

21. *Marvelled that he tarried*, Wondered why he staid.

22. *Beckoned*, Made signs.

23. *The days of his ministration were accomplished*, The eight days were ended, during which the division of priests, or course, of which he was one, had to minister in, or perform the duties of, the temple.

LESSONS.

From this section we learn,

That outward observances do not constitute true piety.—We must not only be righteous before men, but righteous before God, who searches the heart. ver 6.

That they who are righteous before God, are not satisfied with performing only a *part* of their duty, but walk in *all* the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, ver. 6.

That great attainments in holiness may be expected, when relations, and those who dwell under the same roof, are of one mind and one spirit in the service of God, ver. 6.

That the Lord knows best when to grant, and when to withhold temporal blessings. Let us therefore submit to the disposals of his providence with humility and contentment, ver. 7.

That Public Worship is both the privilege and the duty of the people of God ; but while the minister is engaged in praying publicly for all, let us also be found with praying hearts, pouring out our souls before God, ver. 10.

That messages of mercy, are commonly vouchsafed in the performance of duty, ver. 11.

That the people of God are often afraid, when they have greatest cause of confidence and joy, ver. 12.

That nothing is too great for a praying soul to expect, or a prayer-hearing God to bestow. " Thy prayer is heard," is the forerunner of all that is really good, ver. 13.

That godly children are the cause of joy and gladness to their parents, and of numerous blessings to those around them, ver. 14.

That riches, and honours, and power, and popularity, are not true greatness ; it is only true piety, and zeal for the souls of men, a superiority to the smiles or the frowns of the world, which make a man great in the sight of the Lord, ver. 15.

That we cannot begin too soon to bring souls to Christ.— John was filled with the Holy Ghost from the date of his birth, ver. 15.

That the effects of divine grace in ourselves, will lead to successful endeavours for the benefit of others, ver. 16.

That means are commonly used by God in preparing

souls for the reception of the gospel ; let us be diligent in their use, and pray for the blessing, ver. 17.

That whenever we lose sight of the power, and faithfulness of God, we are in danger of falling into the sin of unbelief.—Natural unfitness is no bar to the power of God, ver. 18.

That God will punish unbelief wherever it is found, even in those who are truly righteous in his sight, ver. 20.

That unbelief is not only detrimental to ourselves, but prevents our usefulness to others.—Zacharias' mouth was shut, when he had the greatest need of its use, in communicating the best news the world had yet received, ver. 22.

That though under chastisement, we must persist in our duty. Perseverance in the service of God, is the best way to have our afflictions removed, and to lighten them while they continue, ver. 23.

That Public Worship is but a part of our duty ; the domestic circle claims the greatest share of our time and care. When the Public Services are over, we must depart to serve God, each in his own house, ver. 23.

SECTION II.

John the Baptist's Birth.—LUKE i. 57—80

NARRATIVE.

THE Angel Gabriel having foretold that Zacharias and Elizabeth should have a child, he was deputed a few months after to convey a similar message to a virgin named Mary, (Luke i. 26—38.) who was a cousin to Elizabeth, and to whom she paid a visit, (Luke i. 39—56.) In due time, Elizabeth was delivered of a son.—Her neighbours and cousins hearing of the circumstance came to wish her joy, and perform the ceremony of circumcision on the child eight days after he was born. It being customary to give the child his name at this time,

they proposed to call him Zacharias after his father to this his mother objected, and insisted on his being a John; to which his father also gave his sanction writing, as he was not able at this time to speak. What the angel had predicted, was now fulfilled, and Zacharias again got the use of his speech and hearing; and being filled with the Holy Ghost, he prophesied of the coming Messiah, and of John as his forerunner. John grew and was remarkable for his natural abilities and energy of mind, and lived in a very private manner, till the time he began his public ministry.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 57. What is said of Elizabeth? Of what was she delivered?—58. What had the Lord done for her? Who heard of this? What did they do?—59. What did they come to do on the eighth day? *What name was first proposed for the child?* Why call him Zacharias?—60. Who prevented his being thus called? What did his mother propose to call him?—61. Who objected to Elizabeth's proposal? (*See ver. 58.*) Why did they object to it?—62. To whom did they then apply? How did they ask him? What did they ask him?—63. *How did Zacharias signify his will?* What did he write? What effect had this on the friends and neighbours?—64. What happened to Zacharias when he had done this? What did he do when he got his speech?—65. What effect was produced on those who dwelt round about? What were noised abroad? When were they noised abroad?—66. What did the people do? What did the people say? What was with John?—67. What is said of Zacharias? What did he do?—68. Whom did he bless? Why did he bless God?—69. What had God raised up? For whom, and where had he raised this up?—70. Who had spoken of those things? From what time had they spoken of those things?—71. From whom was Christ to save his people?—72. What mercy was he to perform? What was he to remember?—73. To whom had God sworn to do all this?—74. From whom was he to deliver his people? For

what purpose was God to deliver them?—75. In what were they to serve him? How long were they to serve him?—76. *What did he prophecy that John was to be?* Before whom was he to go? Why was he to go before him?—77. To whom was he to communicate the knowledge of salvation? By what were they to receive salvation?—78. From what did this salvation flow? What had visited his people through the tender mercy of God?—79. To whom was he to give light? Whither does he guide their feet?—80. What is said of John? Where was he? Till when was he there?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 59. *On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child.* This ceremony, the sign of the covenant made with Abraham, was performed by the Jews eight days after a son was born.

61. *Thy kindred,* Thy relations.

63. *He asked for a writing table,* He made signs as if he had asked for one.—*Marvelled all,* They all wondered.

65. *Noised abroad,* Were much talked of.

66. *Laid them up in their hearts,* Thought much about them, and resolved to keep them in remembrance.

68. *Redeemed,* Saved, or purchased back.

69. *A horn of Salvation,* A mighty and desirable salvation;—A horn being the emblem of beauty and strength.

72. 73. *Remember his holy covenant,* &c. Fulfil the promises made to his people, particularly to Abraham.

76. *Prepare his way,* Give information of his coming, and prepare the Jews for this important event, by repentance and humility.

77. *Remission,* Forgiveness of sins.

78. *Day spring from on high,* The dawning of that day from heaven, which brought the Saviour, the Sun of righteousness.

79. *Sit in darkness and the shadow of death,* Ignorance of the true way of salvation; like criminals in the shades of a dungeon, waiting the infliction of death without the

knowledge or the hope of escape.—*Way of peace*, The plan of salvation by Jesus Christ, by which peace is proclaimed betwixt God and the sinner.

30. *Strong in Spirit*, Acquired great strength of mind, and soundness of judgment.—*Desert*, Lonely and unfrequented places.—*Showing unto Israel*, Till he publicly showed himself as the forerunner of Christ.

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn,

That as children are intended by God to be blessings to their parents, they ought by their dutiful and pious conduct to make themselves such, ver. 58.

That all our blessings are to be traced to the mercy of God. It is of his mercy we are not consumed, ver. 58.

That as delay often magnifies our mercies, making them more sweet and us more thankful, we ought not to be impatient; but by watching and prayer, wait God's time as being the fittest and the best for receiving them, ver. 58.

That blessings conferred on our neighbours and friends should be matter of thanksgiving to us, as well as to them.—We ought to rejoice with them who rejoice, ver. 58.

That children are God's property, lent to parents to train them up for him; they ought therefore to dedicate their children early to God, according to his appointment, ver. 59.

That we ought not to follow our own opinions, or the customs of the world, when contrary to the commandment of God, ver. 60, 61.

That the conduct of the people of God, in acting according to their conscience, will sometimes cause even the friends to marvel.—God is to be obeyed, however rather than men, ver. 63.

That deliverance from any affliction or punishment should be followed by the voice of thanksgiving and praise, ver. 64.

That God's mercies to his people will sometimes cause fears and anxieties to the men of the world, ver. 65.

SECT. 2. *John the Baptist.*

That God's merciful dealings with his people should frequently be made the subject of their conversation, ver. 65.

That we ought carefully to remember the promises of God, and watch for their fulfilment, ver. 66.

That the Lord protects, and supports, and guides his children from their infancy; the hand of the Lord is with them, ver. 66.

That the promises of God are as sure, as if they were already performed, "He *hath* visited his people," is the language of faith, as soon as they are assured that the promise has been given, ver. 68.

That deliverance from our enemies is valuable, principally as it enables us more freely, and more spiritually to serve God in holiness and righteousness all our days, ver. 74, 75.

That teachers and ministers should prepare souls for conversion by exhorting to repentance and humility, and directing them to Christ, who alone can grant remission of sin and deliverance from death, ver. 76, 77.

That men by nature are involved in spiritual darkness, and lying in the region and shadow of death; Christ alone, the day spring from on high, the Sun of righteousness, can bring them relief, ver. 78, 79.

SECTION III.

Christ's Parentage.—Matth. i. 18—25.

NARRATIVE.

Joseph, a carpenter, and in low circumstances, though a descendant from David, the pious King of Israel, had betrothed a young woman called Mary, with the intention of marrying her as soon as circumstances rendered their union convenient. While matters were in this state, an angel appeared to Mary, (See Luke i. 26—38.)

and told her, that by the miraculous interposition of the Holy Spirit, she would be with child of the Messiah, the Son of God and Saviour of men. Joseph, being ignorant of the circumstances of the vision, and perceiving that his betrothed bride was with child, determined to break off the match in a private way, without publicly exposing his intended wife to the punishment of death. His doing so, however, was prevented by an angel, who communicated to him the circumstance, and desired him not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife, as she was eminently virtuous, and yet a virgin. This he accordingly did, but refrained from living with her as her husband till after the birth of Jesus Christ, which took place soon after.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 18. *Who was the mother of Jesus?* To whom was she espoused? In what situation was she at this time? By whose miraculous power had this taken place? When was she found with child?—19. What was Joseph said to be? What was he unwilling to do? *What did he intend to do?*—20. Did he do this? *What prevented him?* How did the angel appear to him? What did the angel call him? What did he say Mary was? What did he bid him not fear? Why was he to take her?—21. Of what was she to be delivered? What was to be his name? Why was he to be so called? From what was he to save his people?—22. Who spake the prophecy which this fulfilled? By what did the Lord speak this prophecy? What prophet was this? (See Isa. vii. 14.) For what purpose was all this done?—23. Who was to be with child? What was she to bring forth? What was to be his name? What is the meaning of that name?—24. What did Joseph do? When did he do this? Why did he do this?—25. What son of Mary is he said to be? What did Joseph call the child? Why did he call him Jesus? (See verse 21.)

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 18. *On this wise,* After this manner.—*Espoused,* Contracted, or engaged to become husband and wife

T. 3. *Of Jesus Christ.* **15**

marriage ; they were as bride and bridegroom.—*Be-
they came together*, Before they were married, or
d together as husband and wife.—*Of the Holy Ghost*,
the miraculous power of God the Holy Spirit.

9. *Public example*, (See Lev. xx. 10. and Deut. xxi.)
) *Privily*, In a private manner, without making the
circumstance known.

10. *Appeared unto him in a dream*, He saw a vision
while he was asleep ; but of such a kind as convinced
Joseph that it was not an ordinary dream. (See Numb.
7. 6.)

22. *That it might be fulfilled*, Circumstances were so
arranged in the providence of God, as exactly to ac-
complish the predictions of the prophets.—*Spoken of
by the Lord by the prophet*, The words of the prophets are
the words of God ; prophets were but the means of com-
munication.

23. *Shall be called Emmanuel*, He shall be Emmanuel,
God with us, (See Isa. lvi. 7. compared with Luke
xi. 46.)

25. *Took unto him his wife, &c.* Received her into his
house, but did not sleep with her as his wife.

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn,

That God holds the distinctions of rank among men in
no estimation.—She whom he blessed and favoured
above all women, was an obscure, but pious virgin, be-
trothed to a carpenter, a just man, but in the lowest
ranks of life, ver. 18.

That the most virtuous will sometimes, in the course of
providence, be liable to unjust and cruel suspicions ;
and sometimes, also, to unmerited punishment and
disgrace, ver. 18.

That good men are liable to form very erroneous judg-
ments, in estimating the character and conduct of
others, ver. 19.

That we ought always to judge charitably and with
caution ; never accusing others without sufficient evi-
dence, or upon mere suspicions, ver. 19.

That we ought not to be too ready to judge by appearances ; and, in cases which are in any degree doubtful, we should always chuse lenient, rather than severe measures, ver. 19.

That unjust and erroneous suspicions, are sometimes found in the minds of pious as well as ungodly which are neither the effect of hatred nor ill will. Joseph was a good man, and loved Mary ; but circumstances in providence gave him an erroneous view of her character, ver. 19.

That when unjustly suspected, or falsely accused, we ought not to be over-anxious to vindicate ourselves. Let us keep the straight line of duty, and God at last bring forth our righteousness as the light

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That they who are favoured of God, are often, for their own good, exposed to unjust calumnies and suspicions which, as " thorns" in the flesh, and messengers of Satan, help to mortify their pride, and deepen their humility, ver. 19.

That the Lord will, in the course of his providence, vindicate the character of his people, in such a way, at such a time, as may prevent those evils which are feared, and shall turn out most for their benefit, ver. 20.

That the Lord will direct his people in every doubtful case.—" In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy paths," ver. 20.

That the salvation of the gospel is a salvation from sin and not in sin.—They who will not forsake their sins have no right to claim the privileges of the gospel, ver. 21.

That the New Testament dispensation, is the confirmation and fulfilment of the Old.—" To him gave the prophets witness," ver. 22.

That the Bible is the word of God, and a message from him. It comes to us clothed with his authority, though spoken and written by the apostles and prophets, ver. 22.

That Jesus Christ is God, equal with the Father, and is in our nature, " God with us," ver. 23.

SECT. 4. *The Birth of Jesus Christ.* 17

That instant obedience is the only mark of our sincerity.—“I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments,” ver. 24, 25.

SECTION IV.

***The Birth of Jesus Christ.*—Luke ii. 1—20**

NARRATIVE.

AUGUSTUS CESAR, the Roman Emperor, having issued a decree for taxing the whole Roman empire, of which Judea was at this time a province, Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem to get their names enrolled. That city being at this time crowded by people, Joseph and Mary could not be admitted into the inn, and had to take up their residence in a stable. Here Jesus was born; and being wrapped in such clothes as his mother could procure, was laid to sleep in a manger.

Numerous flocks of sheep were fed in the plains of Bethlehem; and that night, while the shepherds were watching them from robbers and wild beasts, a glorious angel appeared to them, told them of the birth of the Saviour, and directed them where they would find him. They accordingly went to Bethlehem, found the Virgin Mary and the child Jesus, as the angel had mentioned; and made known to their neighbours and the people around them the wonderful vision which they had seen, and the important communication delivered by the angel.

EXERCISE.

- Ver. 1. Who issued this decree? What was decreed?
—2. When was this tax first made?—3. What did the people do? Where did each one go?—4. From whence did Joseph go? *Whither did he go?* What is Bethlehem said to be? Why did he go to the city of David?
—5. *Who went with him?* In what condition was

18 *The Birth of Jesus Christ.* SECT. 33.

Mary?—6. While there, what were accomplished?—7. Of what was she delivered? In what did she wrap him? Where did she lay him? Why did she lay him in a manger?—8. *Who were in the field?* What were they doing? At what time were they watching?—9. Who came upon them? What shone around them? What effect did this produce on them?—10. Who spake to them? How did he address them? What did he say he brought to them? To whom were these to be good tidings?—11. What was born to them? Who was this Saviour? Where was the Saviour born? When was he born?—12. Where was the babe to be found? In what was he to be found? What was this to be?—13. Who appeared with the angel? What did they do?—14. What did they ascribe to God? What was to be on earth? What had been shewn to men?—15. Where did the shepherds resolve to go? What were they to do there? When did they resolve to do this? Who did they say had revealed this unto them?—16. How did they go? Whom did they find? *Where was the child?*—17. When they saw this, what did they do? What did they make known?—18. What effect did these news produce on the people?—19. What did Mary do? In what did she ponder them?—20. What did the shepherds do when they returned? For what did they praise God?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 1. *Decree*, An order.—*All the world*, The whole Roman empire, comprehending at that time the greater part of the known world.—*Taxed*, To pay a certain sum for the maintenance of government.

4. *City of David*, Bethlehem, the city to which the family of David belonged.—*House and lineage of David*, Was descended from David.

7. *Swaddling clothes*, Pieces of cloth wrapped or folded round the body, instead of baby-clothes.—*Manger*, A long box or trough, from which beasts are fed.

8. *Shepherds*, Keepers of sheep.—*Abiding*, Remaining, or stopping in the field.—*Keeping watch*, Refraining from

SECT. 4. *The Birth of Jesus Christ.* 19

sleep, lest the flocks of sheep should be stolen, or destroyed by wild beasts.

9. *Glory of the Lord*, A great and glorious light.

10. *Good tidings*, The gospel, or glad news.

13. *Suddenly*, Hastily, in a moment.—*Multitude*, A great number.—*Heavenly host*, Angels.

19. *Pondered them in her heart*, Considered them attentively ; weighed them in her mind.

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn,

That the Lord can, and will overrule the actions of kings for the good of his people. The humble Mary must be delivered in Bethlehem ; and to accomplish this, the Roman Emperor issues a decree for the whole empire, ver. 4, 5.

That it is the duty of Christians cheerfully to submit to the laws of the land, and to “ render unto Cesar the things that are Cesar's,” ver. 4, 5.

That the people of God are led in a way they know not. Mary's situation would probably have prevented her from leaving her home ; but the imperious edict of the Emperor himself, is employed by God as the means to bring her to Bethlehem, ver. 5, 6.

That poverty is honourable and safe. While the Lord passed by the rich, he honoured the poor ; and himself “ became poor, that we might be rich,” ver. 7.

That it is better to entertain the poor who are in need, than feast the rich who require it not.—Many apartments in the inn would be retained for pomp, while the mother of our Lord had, from necessity, to seek lodging in a stable, ver. 7.

That we ought to be kind and hospitable to strangers. What an honour would have attached to the mansion which gave birth to the Son of God !—By exercising this virtue, “ some have entertained angels unawares,” ver. 7.

That distinctions of rank upon earth, are entirely disregarded by the angels in heaven. The humble and pious shepherds, pursuing their employment with ho-

20 *The Birth of Jesus Christ.* SECT. 4.

nest industry, are the persons whom they, by the direction of God, seek to honour, ver. 8, 9.

That gracious messages may be expected, in the faithful and diligent performance of secular duties, ver. 8, 9.

That the people of God are often afraid, when they have most cause to rejoice and be glad, ver. 9.

That the glory of heaven is too bright for mortal eyes in this world. It is only when the glory of heaven shall break through the shades of death, that the soul, made perfect in holiness, shall be enabled to endure and rejoice in it, ver. 9.

That heavenly messengers are terrible instructors, even when conveying peaceful tidings. Let us be thankful, that the message of salvation is committed to men like ourselves, "whose terror maketh not afraid," ver. 9.

That the news of gospel salvation is the best antidote to fear. "Fear not," is its first salutation, its constant privilege, and its last injunction in this world, ver. 10.

That as the gospel is intended to diffuse joy and gladness, it is the weakness of our faith which makes us refuse comfort, and encourage melancholy, ver. 10.

That as the gospel is *designed* for all people, we should never cease our exertions in propagating its truths, till it has been *made known* to all people, ver. 10.

That the source of gospel comfort is the personal application of its blessings :—Unto *you* is born a Saviour, ver. 11.

That those things which to human wisdom would appear the greatest bar to believing the gospel, are often to the people of God the very sign of their being from heaven.—Christ's condescension was made the sign of his divinity, ver. 12.

That discontent with our worldly condition is unreasonable and sinful.—If the Lord of glory humbled himself to a stable and a manger, we, who have nothing, and deserve nothing, ought not only to be contented, but thankful, ver. 12.

That parents who have little for their children, ought

diligently to use and improve what they have. Mary's want of clothes and a cradle, were supplied by swaddling bands and a manger: parents who cannot give their children the comforts, or even the necessities of life, *may* procure for them education, and *must* bring them up in the fear and the knowledge of God, ver. 12.

That if the salvation of man is the wonder and the song of angels, how ungrateful and wicked are we, if we reject its terms, and refuse its offers? "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation," ver. 13.

That if peace on earth and good will to men, are the effects of the gospel, it should be our study never to indulge or encourage hatred or envy, in ourselves or others, ver. 14.

That we ought to excite and encourage each other in the performance of duty; "they said one to another," ver. 15.

That we ought not to load others with burdens which we ourselves will not touch with one of our fingers."

We ought not to say, "Go ye;" but setting the example, and joining in the duty, we ought to say with the shepherds, "Let us go," &c. ver. 15.

That we ought not to delay following the directions of God, but instantly set about doing what he desires. "Let us now go," ver. 15.

That special instances of God's attention and kindness to us individually, ought to quicken our desires to become better acquainted with all the wonders of his goodness and love. "Let us go and see the thing which God hath revealed to us," ver. 15.

That the sincerity of our professions of obedience is to be known only by our carrying them into effect.—The sincerity of the resolution of the shepherds, "Let us now go," is evidenced by their "coming with haste," ver. 16.

That diligence in the use of appointed means will always be followed by promised success. "They came with haste,—and they found" the truth of what the angel had told them, ver. 16.

That the experience of God's love to his people, uniformly prompts them to make him known to others. "They made it known abroad," ver. 17.

That the revelation of God's goodness ought never to be heard with indifference. We also have cause to "wonder" at his condescension and kindness, ver. 18.

That persons, even in the lowest ranks of society, may be useful to others, if they have a desire to be so. These humble shepherds were the honoured instruments of making known the Saviour, and made "all that heard them wonder," ver. 18.

That the truths of God must not be wondered at and then forgotten. They should be "kept, and pondered in the heart," ver. 19.

That devout meditation on the things of God, is the mark of superior attainments in the divine life. Mary, the highly favoured of God, "pondered these things in her heart," ver. 19.

That returning to the duties of life from the observances of religion, should always be in the spirit of gratitude and praise, ver. 20.

That the experience of Christians is intended for strengthening their faith in all the truths of God. What they had "heard and seen" made them also praise God for those things which "were told them," ver. 20.

SECTION V.

Visit of the Wise Men of the East.

Matth. ii. 1—18.

NARRATIVE.

JESUS being born at Bethlehem, was circumcised, and after forty days, presented in the temple at Jerusalem. Here Simeon and Anna met them, and prophesied of the child as the expectation and hope of Israel, (Luke ii. 21—38. Mary and Joseph went first to their own city,

h, which they soon left with the child Jesus, and
ain to Bethlehem, where he had been born.

e time of Jesus' birth, a remarkable star had ap-
n the heavens, which excited the attention of
osophers in the east country; who came, direct-
his star to Judea, and enquired where the Mes-
e King of the Jews, was to be born. They were
to Bethlehem; to which place the star also
sfore them. Here they found the child; and
ffered him gifts, departed again to their own
by a different way, and Joseph was directed in-
to depart for Egypt, which he did.

e meantime, Herod, disappointed in not finding
y means of the wise men, ordered all the chil-
Bethlehem to be murdered, in the hope of kill-
as among them. (Matth. ii. 16—18.)

continued in Egypt till Herod's death, when he
d with his parents to Nazareth, (Matth. ii. 23.)
p with them yearly to Jerusalem to worship God;
f which times he was found disputing with the
in the temple, when only twelve years of age.
ii. 41—52.)

EXERCISE. •

1. Where was Jesus born? In what country
hlehem? Who was king at this time? Who
Jerusalem? From whence did they come?—2.
om did they inquire? What had they seen?
had they come to do?—3. Who heard these

What effect had this on him? Who else were
besides him?—4. Whom did Herod collect to-
What did he ask them?—5. Where did they
vas to be born? How did they know that?—
t did the prophet say Bethlehem was? What
ome out of Bethlehem? What was he to do?
cah v. 2.)—7. What did Herod do? How did
them? What did he enquire of them? How
quire this at them?—8. *Where did he send*
For what purpose did he send them? What
y to do when they found the child? What did

Herod pretend he was to do?—9. When they departed, what went before them? Where did it stop?—10. What did they do when they saw the star?—11. Where did they go? Whom did they see? What did they do? What did they present to him?—12. Whither did they go? How did they go? Why did they go home another way? What did God warn them not to do?—13. Who appeared to Joseph? When did he appear to him? How did he appear to him? Whither did he bid him flee? Whom was he to take with him? Why was he to flee? When was he to leave Egypt?—14. What did Joseph do? When did he this? Whither did they go?—15. Till when was he in Egypt? What prophesy did his going to Egypt fulfil? (See Hos. xi. 1.)—16. What did Herod think the wise men had done to him? What effect had this disappointment on him? What did he do? What children did he slay? What were the ages of the children slain? What made him fix on that age?—17. What prophesy did this fulfil? (See Jer. xxxi. 15.)—18. Where did the prophet say the voice was heard? What was heard besides the voice? Who was weeping? For what was she weeping? Why did she refuse? Why refuse to be comforted?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 1. *Wise men from the East*, Or philosophers from the countries east from Judea; probably from Arabia.

2. *His star*, An uncommon appearance, like a star in the heavens, which they conjectured, or perhaps God revealed to them, indicated the birth of him who was to be the "desire of all nations."

3. *All Jerusalem*, A great proportion of the people of Jerusalem.

4. *Scribes, Writers, and expounders of the law*. Christ The Messiah, the anointed of God.

6. *Princes of Judah*, Portions of Judah, governed by princes. *Governor*, A ruler, or king.

7. *Privily*, Privately, or in a secret manner. *Diligently*, Anxiously and repeatedly.

8. *Search diligently*, Anxiously enquire him out.

10. *Rejoiced with exceeding great joy*, They were very glad.

11. *Frankincense*, A valuable sweet smelling resin.

Myrrh, A precious kind of gum.

16. *Mocked of the wise men*, Affronted by their not doing as he desired. *Exceeding wroth*, Very angry, and in a great passion. *All the coasts thereof*, The suburbs and villages in its neighbourhood. *Diligently enquired*, Anxiously asked.

17. *Jeremy*, The prophet Jeremiah.

18. *Lamentation*, Expression of great sorrow. *They are not*, They were dead ; not alive.

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn,

That they who are at a distance from ordinances, are often more anxious, and more successful in improving them, than those who are more highly favoured, ver. 1.

That they who have a real desire to serve God, will have his Star to direct them in the proper way, ver. 2.

That we ought never to rest satisfied with any thing short of Christ himself. "We have seen his star," but where is *he*, ver. 2.

That the majesty and dominion of Christ, make the wicked tremble, ver. 3.

That the diligence and zeal of enquirers, will sometimes cause even the wicked to bestir themselves, ver. 4.

That every difficulty or doubt in religious matters, ought to lead us to the ministers of Christ for information and direction, ver. 4.

That the Scriptures of truth alone, must direct the ministers of Christ in solving difficulties.—"Thus it is written," is their only warrant, ver. 5.

That the glory of nations lies in the righteousness of its inhabitants.—"Thou art not the least,"—"for out of thee shall come," &c. ver. 6.

That wicked purposes are often concealed under religious pretences, ver. 7, 8.

That wicked men will sometimes be content to perform the easy part of their duty, but refuse the more dif-

fact. "Search him out, and then I will worship him," ver. 8.

That diligence in that which is within our power, will procure us assistance in that which is not. It was not till they had searched out the town, that the star directed them to the house where Christ was to be found. "To him that hath more shall be given," ver. 9.

That every indication of the guidance of God, is cause of joy to his people. When he points the way, let us rejoice to walk in it, ver. 10.

That the way of God always leads to ultimate success.

The star may be under a cloud, or disappear for a time; but "if we follow on to know the Lord, we shall know him," ver. 11.

That Christ will have no sharer with himself in our worship and adoration. They found the mother, but they worshipped only the child, ver. 11.

That giving the heart to Christ, will lead us to give our all to Christ. Opening the heart in devotion, led the wise men to open their treasures, and dedicate them all to his service, ver. 11.

That avoiding the company and conversation of wicked men, is the surest way of not being partakers with them in their crimes, ver. 12.

That God is able to defeat the designs of the wicked, when intended for the destruction of his people or church. "Herod will seek to destroy," but shall not be able, ver. 13.

That strangers are often more hospitable and kind than pretended friends.—Herod pretends to worship, while he designs to kill; while the heathen Egyptians succour the Messiah, and restore him again safe, ver. 14.

That the warnings of God, should be followed by instant flight from the danger. Joseph did not stay till the morning, but fled while it was yet night. Let us instantly flee from the wrath to come, ver. 14.

That the persecution of God's people, though long continued, will come to an end. Death will for ever break the sword of the persecutor, and destroy his power, ver. 16.

That obedience to the commandments of God is often considered an injury and an insult to the men of the world. Herod considers himself mocked, and is exceeding wroth, because the wise men obey God rather than him, ver. 16.

That religious knowledge is often used for the worst of purposes. Herod's information from the wise men, of the time when the star appeared, is the cause of his killing every child under two years old, ver. 16.

That selfishness is often the cause both of sin and of sorrow. Herod's guilty fears are the cause of Rachel's wretchedness; and his security must be purchased at the expense of her children's murder, ver. 18.

SECTION VI.

Baptism and Temptations of Christ.—Matth. **iii** 13—17. and iv. 1—11.

See also Mark i. 9. and Luke **iii**. 21.

NARRATIVE.

JOHⁿ the Baptist, having begun to declare the approach of the Messiah, and to baptize the people in Jordan, (Matth. **iii**. 1--12, Mark i. 1--8, Luke **iii**. 1--18.) Jesus also was baptized by him; and on that occasion, when come up from the water, there was a visible descent of the Holy Ghost upon him, and a voice from Heaven, declaring him to be the Son of God.—(Matth. **iii**. 16.) He was then led by direction of the Spirit to the Wilderness, where he was about six weeks with the wild beasts, and without food, tempted of Satan. The three last of these temptations only are recorded:—*1st*, He was tempted to distrust the providence of God, and command the stones to become bread, for the satisfying of his hunger:—*2d*, He was tempted to presume on the care of God, by unnecessarily rushing into danger: and *3d*, He was tempted to prefer worldly grandeur and power,

to the worship and service of the only true God. These temptations, however, he successfully resisted. Satan left him, without being able to accomplish his design, and angels came and ministered to him.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 13. From whence did Jesus come? Whither did he go? To whom did he go? For what purpose did he go? 14. Who forbade him? Why did he forbid him? 15. Who answered John? What did he desire? What reason did he give? What did John do? 16. What did Jesus do after he was baptized? What happened when he was coming out of the water? *What did he see?* How did it descend? Where did it alight? —17. What was heard? What did the voice call Jesus? Whose beloved Son was he? What did God say of his beloved Son?

Chap. IV. 1. Whither was Jesus led? By whom was he led? For what purpose was he led into the Wilderness? *By whom was he tempted?*—2. How long was he there? What is said he did during those forty days? What was he after the forty days?—3. Who came to him? *What did the tempter require him to do?* What was this to be an evidence of?—4. Who answered Satan? From what passage did he answer Satan? (See Deut. viii. 3.) By what did he say men were not to live? By what were they to live?—5. Whither did Satan take him? Where did he set him?—6. *What did Satan bid him do?* Of what was this to be an evidence? From whence did Satan quote a passage? (See Psal. xci. 11, 12.) To whom did God give this charge? How were they to bear him up? Why did they so bear him up?—7. From what passage did Christ answer Satan? (See Deut. vi. 16.) Whom are we not to tempt?—8. Whither did Satan next take our Lord? What did he shew him?—9. What did he promise to give him? *Upon what condition was he to give him these?*—10. What did Jesus command Satan to do? What passage did Jesus quote? (See Deut. x. 20.) Whom are we alone to worship?—

SECT. 6. *Temptations of Christ.* 29

11. Who left him? Whom did he leave? Who came to Jesus? For what did they come?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 13. *From Galilee to Jordan*, From the country called Galilee, to the river Jordan.

14. *Forbade him*, Requested Jesus to desist; hesitated to do as he was required.

15. *Suffer it to be so now*, Let it be as I desire in the present instance.—*Fulfil all righteousness*, Do every thing which God has commanded.

16. *Straightway*, Immediately.

Chap. iv. 1. *Wilderness*, Lonely place, without inhabitants.—*Tempted*, Tried, and exposed to the seductions and deceptions of Satan.

3. *The tempter*, He that tempts; Satan, the enemy and seducer of mankind.

4. *Every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*, All that God has revealed by his servants, and to be found in the Bible.

5. *Holy City*, Jerusalem.—*Pinnacle of the temple*, One of the high ornamental parts of the temple, which rose above it like spires.

6. *Dash*, Strike with force.

7. *Tempt*, Try.

9. *Worship me*, Acknowledge me as God, and pay me divine honours.

10. *Get thee hence*, Go from me.

11. *Ministered*, Served, or assisted him; gave him what he required.

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn,

That the most eminent saints ought never to neglect the appointed means of grace. Jesus himself fulfilled all righteousness, ver. 13.

That the most eminent Christians ought to submit to the ministration of their less qualified, or less honourable brethren, ver. 13.

That the most eminent saints are always the most humble, ver. 14.

That a sense of personal unworthiness must never prevent the performance of commanded duty, ver. 14.

That unscriptural views of the relation betwixt God and us, will tend to error, and may make us mislead others.

That the condescension of Christ in seeking out his people, should always be the subject of admiring gratitude. "Comest thou to me!" ver. 14.

That the errors of our brethren ought always to be met with kindness and persuasion, as well as by argument, ver. 15.

That outward ordinances are intended for all saints, for perfecting their advancement in holiness, ver. 15.

That we ought at once to give up former opinions and prejudices, when they are shewn to be wrong, ver. 15.

That it is not only at the time, but *after* attending upon ordinances, that we receive the full benefit of them, ver. 16.

That in attending upon the solemn institutions of the gospel, we have reason to hope for the opening of heaven and the descent of the Spirit, ver. 16.

That the influences of the Holy Ghost, tend not to excite angry passions and a persecuting spirit; but are calm and gentle, as the descent of a dove, ver. 16.

That the special blessing and approbation of God may be expected in the use of his appointed ordinances, ver. 17.

That retirement, meditation, and prayer, are necessary duties for the most advanced Christians, chap. iv. 1.

That the greatest advances in holiness are no security against the attacks of Satan, ver. 1.

That temptations to sin are only sinful when they are complied with, or indulged.—Christ was tempted, but he did not sin, ver. 1.

That all our trials and temptations are directed, or overruled, for wise purposes by the Spirit of God, ver. 1.

That though the assistances of the Spirit of God may be long continued, they are sometimes again withheld for the trial of our faith, ver. 2.

That as Satan suits himself to our circumstances, we must always be on our guard against those sins which are most likely to beset us, ver. 3.

SECT. 6. *Temptations of Christ.* 31

That Satan is peculiarly dangerous when he pretends friendship, and offers his help, ver. 3.

That the wicked often pretend to ask for evidence, when it is neither wanted nor wished, ver. 3.

That we ought to be careful, in every strait, never to attempt removing our difficulties by improper means, ver. 3.

That every temptation should be repelled by the truths of the Bible. "It is written," is the Christian's sword, ver. 4.

That bread for the body is of infinitely less importance than the bread of life, the word of God, for the nourishment of the soul, ver. 4.

That as the word of God is the food of the soul, we ought to be regular in receiving its nourishment, ver. 4.

That prophets and apostles who wrote the word of God, are but the organs of the Almighty;—they are but "the mouth of God," ver. 4.

That holy things, great spiritual attainments, and the high places of the temple, are sometimes made snares for the ruin of souls, ver. 5.

That Satan's temptations often run to extremes.—If we will not be tempted to distrust God, he will tempt us to presumption, ver. 6.

That temptations often arise from partial and disconnected views of the word of God, ver. 6.

That Satan is most to be feared by the people of God, when concealing his designs under the pretence of Scripture warrant, ver. 6.

That though the Lord has promised to protect his people, they are to expect this protection only in the use of his appointed means, ver. 6, 7.

That the good things of the world are the cause of many ruinous temptations, ver. 8.

That Satan's promises are but vain delusions; a shadow without a substance, ver. 8.

That Satan often promises what he has no power to bestow.—He "is a liar from the beginning," ver. 9.

That the best of men may be assailed with the most horrible temptations, ver. 9.

32 *Christ turns Water into Wine.* SACR. 7.

That refusing the service of God, and living to the world, is deliberately chusing the service and worship of Satan, ver. 9, 10.

That we ought never to entertain a temptation for a moment. Our language should be at the instant "Get thee hence, Satan," ver. 10, 11.

That we are not to expect the assistance or ministration of holy angels, while we indulge the suggestions, or continue in the service of Satan, ver. 11.

That a successful resistance of temptation, will procure greater strength and grace for the time to come, ver. 11.

SECTION VII.

Christ turns Water into Wine.—John ii. 1—11.

NARRATIVE.

JESUS having begun his public ministry, called to him several disciples, among whom were Andrew, Peter, and Philip. Philip introduced Nathanael to Jesus, who also became his disciple, and with whom he held an interesting conversation, (John i. 45—51.) Three days after, our Lord having been invited, with his mother and his disciples, went to a marriage in Cana, a town in Galilee. The company being in want of wine, the mother of Jesus let him know the circumstance, and at the same time desired the servants to do as they might be desired by him. He made the servants fill six stone pots with water, which he miraculously turned into the best wine; and by this first miracle, manifested his power in the presence of a large company, and confirmed the faith of his disciples in the truth of his mission.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 1. What took place on the third day? In what town was this marriage? Where was Cana? Who was

ECT. 7. *Christ turns Water into Wine.* 33

the marriage?—2. To what was Jesus called? Who were called with him?—3. *What was wanting at the marriage?* Who took notice of this? To whom did she take notice of this?—4. What did Jesus call her? What did he say to discourage her from interfering with his miraculous power? What was not yet come?—5. Who spake to the servants? What did she desire them to do?—6. What were standing there? How many pots were there? Of what were they made? For what were they used? How much did they hold?—7. *With what were these pots ordered to be filled?* Who ordered this? Who were ordered to do this? What did they do?—8. Who spake to them when they had done this? What were they desired to draw? To whom were they to bear, or carry it? What did they do?—9. To what was the water turned? Who tasted it? Who knew of its having been water? Who did not know this? What did he do?—10. When did people put down good wine? When was the worst kind put down? What did he say the bridegroom had done?—11. What is this miracle said to be? Where was it performed? What did it manifest? *What effect had it on his disciples?*

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 1. *Cana of Galilee*, Cana, a small town in the district of Galilee.

2. *Disciples*, Scholars and followers.

4. *What have I to do with thee?* What obedience have you a right to demand from me as the Messiah?—*My time hour is not yet come*, The time of declaring myself publicly as the Messiah, is not yet fully arrived.

6. *After the manner of the purifying of the Jews*, For the purposes of washing, as was usual with the Jews, (See Mark vii. 2—5.)—*Firkin*, About four gallons and a half, or nine Scotch pints.

7. *Brim*, The top; they filled them quite full.

8. *Draw out now, and bear*, &c. Pour, or lift out of the pots, and carry it to the governor, or ruler of the feast, who takes charge of the entertainment.

34 *Christ turns Water into Wine.* SECT. 7.

9. *Bridegroom*, The man who had been, or was about to be married.

11. *Miracles*, Something effected by divine power, out of the ordinary course of nature.—*Manifested forth his glory*, Made known, or gave evidence, of his possessing a glorious and divine nature, and of his being the Messiah.

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn,

That marriage is honourable, and approved of by God; this one having been honoured with the presence of Christ, and made the scene of his first miracle, ver. 1.

That marriages ought to be entered into in such a spirit, and in such circumstances, as will warrant the expectation of having Christ as a guest, ver. 2.

That it is not only lawful, but it may be proper, for the people of God, on certain occasions, to make feasts, and also to attend them.—(See Gen. xxi. 8, and Luke xv. 23—25.) ver. 2.

That in all our feasts, we should secure the presence and the blessing of Christ;—He also should be bidden, ver. 2.

That if we expect the presence of Christ at our feasts, his disciples must be the principal and most welcome guests.—“Wherever two or three are met together in my name, there I am in the midst of them,” ver. 2.

That the enjoyment of the good things of life are not forbidden us by God, but only the irregular or improper use of them, ver. 3.

That in all our feasts upon earth, there will still be some want. Christ alone can furnish that table whereof fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore, ver. 3.

That we should be attentive to the wants of others, that we may have an opportunity of supplying them, ver. 3.

That when we are unable of ourselves to render assistance, we ought to use our influence in procuring the help of those who can, ver. 3.

That to the generous mind, the simple statement of a want is a sufficient request, ver. 3.

LECT. 7. Christ turns Water into Wine. 35

That we must never presume too much on our station or circumstances, in making application for others.

“What have I to do with thee,” may precede the granting of that request which we imprudently, or untimeously asked, ver. 4.

That obedience to the commandments of God, is the readiest way to become partakers of his blessings, ver. 5.

That the most effectual way of benefiting others, is to induce them to follow the directions of the Saviour, ver. 5.

That when we have stated our wants to God, and are ready to submit to his will, we shall not long want whatever shall be really for our good, ver. 7.

That we ought to do what in us lies to relieve the wants of others, ver. 7.

That it is the province of true benevolence, not only to supply the most absolute necessities, but sometimes even conveniences, ver. 7.

That instant and cheerful obedience, is the sure forerunner of future blessings. *Water*, now filled at the command of Christ, will one day be drawn forth the *best wine*, ver. 7.

That when blessings are liberally offered by God, they ought not to be stintedly received by us. They filled the pots *to the brim*. “He that soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly,” ver. 7.

That they who serve, are often more highly favoured than they who are served. Spiritual privileges go not by rank. The *servants* are permitted to witness this first miracle, which the governor and the bridegroom are not, ver. 9.

That they who live nearest to Christ, are best fitted to give information of his ways. The disciples and servants who were with Christ, had to instruct those who made merry at the feast, ver. 9.

That the men of the world take their good wine first, and the chance of the dregs afterwards; but the Christian's wine, though it may at present taste bitter is yet wholesome, and will increase in richness and flavour throughout eternity, ver. 10.

That all the wonders of Christ's people, should increase their love, and excite them to more universal obedience, ver 11.

SECTION V

Interview with the Woman

John iv. 1—

NARRATIVE

JESUS, after driving the people who bought and sold in it, (John 8) conversing with Nicodemus, (John 3) from Judea to Galilee. On his way to Samaria; where one afternoon, before his journey, he sat down on a well. A Samaritan woman coming there for water, was asked him to drink from her pitcher. Her conversation with him ended in her conviction of him to be the Messiah. Having told her countrymen of what she had seen and heard, she saw Jesus, and prevailed on him to tarry with her and her people a few days; after which he left them, and went on to the next city.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 1. Who were the persons who were baptized the greatest numbers? What did Jesus say to them?—2. Who baptized the disciples made? Whence did Jesus go? Whither was he going?—3. What country had he to go to?—4. What did he come to? What was this city?—5. What did Jesus sit?—Whose well was this?—6. What time of day was it?—7. Who came to the well? For what purpose?—8. Whom did she ask?—9. What did he ask of her?—10. Where had they gone?—11. For what had they gone there?—12. What woman say Christ was? What did she say?

men of Samaria. 39

liberal to those who need their
not scruple to deny themselves
necessaries of life, if called
for Christ's sake, ver. 5.
aimless infirmities of humanity
upon earth: ver. 6.
from labour, is not only lawful,

ought always to be wisely
and place, ver. 8.

the sinner at a time and
ould have thought of, ver. 7.
the world ought always to be
to do good to souls, and to

in asking help, when help

requently withdraws the
for receiving or bestow-
v, ver. 9.

the true followers of
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erey, is one great
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e asked, ver. 10.
of our spiritual
ld have given,”

or appreciate,
ver. 11.

is

5. *Parcel of ground*, A piece of land.

6. *Sat thus on the well*, In this condition, weary and thirsty.—*Sixth hour*, Or twelve o'clock in the day.

10. *The gift of God*. His unspeakable gift the Messiah, and salvation promised to men by him.—*Living water*, The influences of the Holy Spirit; compared to "living," or running water, from its inexhaustible fulness and refreshing nature.

14. *Shall be in him a well of water, &c.* Shall be an inexhaustible source of comfort and joy within himself, in his own soul, secured alike from Satan and the world, and continuing unabated and pure throughout eternity.

18. *In that saidst thou truly*, Thou hast in that matter spoken the truth.

20. *This mountain*, Mount Gerrizim in Samaria.

21. *When ye shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father*, God shall not be worshipped in those places exclusively, but may, and will be worshipped every where.

22. *Ye worship ye know not what*, Ye do not know what ye worship.

23, 24. *In spirit and in truth*, Not with outward observances merely, but with sincere devotion of heart and spirit.

24. *The Messiah*, The Saviour.—*Christ*, The anointed, the chosen of God.

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn,

That the success of the Gospel always exasperates hypocrites and wicked men, ver. 1.

That what is done by the servants of Christ, under his authority, is the same as if done by himself, ver. 2.

That it is better to avoid persecution than to brave it.

"When they persecute you in one city, flee ye to another," ver. 3.

That the poor ought never to be discontented with their lot, when their Lord voluntarily suffered weariness, and hunger, and thirst, for their sakes, ver. 5.

SECT. 8. *The Woman of Samaria.* 39

That the rich ought to be liberal to those who need their assistance; and should not scruple to deny themselves the temporal comforts or necessities of life, if called in providence to do so for Christ's sake, ver. 5.

That Jesus endured all the sinless infirmities of humanity for our sakes, while here upon earth. ver. 6.

That rest or relaxation from labour, is not only lawful, but proper, ver. 6.

That relaxation from labour ought always to be wisely chosen, both as to time and place, ver. 6.

That Christ often meets with the sinner at a time and in a way which he never would have thought of, ver. 7.

That our intercourse with the world ought always to be carried on, with the desire to do good to souls, and to glorify God, ver. 7.

That we ought not to hesitate in asking help, when help is really necessary, ver. 7.

That religious controversy frequently withdraws the thoughts from God, and unfits for receiving or bestowing acts of kindness or charity, ver. 9.

That liberality of sentiment in the true followers of Christ, is often the cause of wonder and reproach to the mere professor, ver. 9.

That though the people of God are to keep themselves unspotted from the world, they are not to neglect opportunities of usefulness, or refuse counsel or help to the most worthless, the most prejudiced, or the most ungodly, ver. 10.

That unkindness from men, must always be met by gentleness and submission, ver. 10.

That ignorance of God's goodness and mercy, is one great cause of our neglect of, and failure in, prayer.—“If thou *hadst known*,” thou wouldest have asked, ver. 10.

That the neglect of prayer is the cause of our spiritual poverty. “If thou *hadst asked*, he *would* have given,” ver. 10.

That the carnal mind cannot understand, or appreciate, the value and spirituality of the things of God, ver. 11.

That the source of the Christian's help and comfort is incomprehensible to the worldly man. The well “is

deep," and to him the Christian appears to "have nothing wherewith to draw;" but the water of life is already drawn for the Christian, and he is regularly supplied with its refreshing draughts by the Spirit of God, ver. 11.

That ignorance of the *power* of Christ, is the cause why we doubt his *ability*, ver. 11, 12.

That all worldly comforts are unsatisfying and transient, ver. 13.

That they who place their desires on worldly things will assuredly be disappointed.—They shall "thirst again," ver. 13.

That they who refuse now to drink of the living water of the Gospel, will hereafter deplore their folly, when there will be no help, ver. 13.

That the blessings of the Spirit are satisfying and eternal, ver. 14.

That the happiness and satisfaction enjoyed in religion, are begun in this life, and continue through eternity.—Its joys "spring up unto eternal life," ver. 14.

That the carnal mind sees no beauty in religion, except in so far as it promotes its present comfort, or its worldly interests, ver. 15.

That the desires of the ungodly, for the fulfilment of their lusts, will not be attended to by a holy God, ver. 15, 16.

That the Christian's dealing with the soul of a sinner ought to be with wisdom and prudence.—He should be "taken by guile," ver. 16.

That sin should be reproved with wisdom, and in the spirit of meekness.—"Go, call thy husband," ver. 16.

That reproofs are most likely to produce repentance, when given in secret, ver. 16.

That laying sin directly to the conscience, will tend to produce humility and true repentance, ver. 16—18.

That conviction of sin will generally lead to an acknowledgment of the divinity of Christ, and the power of his word.—It is found to be "quick and powerful," ver. 19.

That disputes about minor points of religion, are often

by sharp rebukes. God's people have often to sing both "of mercy and of judgment," ver. 25.

That it is the *exercise* of faith, and not the mere *possession* of it, which gives comfort and peace. The sword will not defend while it remains in the scabbard. The disciples had faith, but it was not in exercise, ver. 25.

That personal experience of God's mercy and goodness, is the foundation of true godly fear. The fear of the impenitent sinner, regards principally the *punishments* of God, while that of the converted sinner regards *God himself*;—the first is composed of *terror and hate*, while that of the latter is a mixture of *reverential awe*, and *holy love*, ver. 25.

That wherever godly fear is established in the heart, adoring wonder at the goodness and condescension of God in Christ will always follow, ver. 25.

That the soul which has once tasted that God is good, will be led to desire more information regarding his character and doings. "What manner of man is this?" ver. 25.

That a love of, and a desire for, religious conversation, will always accompany godly fear and true humility. —They said "*one to another*, What manner of man is this?"—It is the distinguishing mark of God's people, that they "*spake often one to another*," ver. 25.

That it is great folly and wickedness to oppose or neglect the commandments of Christ. If the *winds* and the *seas* obey him, how much more should we, who are but worms of the dust, ver. 25.

SECTION XII.

Devils cast out.—Mark v. 1—20.

See also Matth. viii. 28. and Luke viii. 26.

NARRATIVE.

WHEN our Lord had crossed the lake of Genesareth, he came to the country of Gadara, and was met by two men possessed with devils. One of these

men seems to have been particularly remarkable in the country, as having been long in this state, as being exceedingly fierce, wearing no clothes, breaking his chains and fetters, and living only among the tombs. When he saw Jesus at a distance, he came running toward him, at which the disciples appear to have been terrified; and Jesus, while he was yet at a distance, commanded the devils to come out. He afterwards permitted them to enter into a herd of swine that were feeding in the neighbourhood, which immediately ran down a steep place into the sea, and were drowned. The keepers of the swine fled into the city, and told what had happened; when the people, fearing lest he should destroy more of their property, came out of the town to meet him, and earnestly entreated him to go away from them;—which accordingly he did. The man out of whom he had cast the devils, wished to accompany him; but Jesus desired him to stay, and make known to his worldly minded and ungodly countrymen, the kindness and mercy of him whom they had thus rejected. Jesus and his disciples again passed over to the other side of the lake, where he was gladly received by the people, who had been waiting for him.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 1. Who had come over? From whence had they come? Into whose country had they come?—2. Who met Jesus? When did he meet him? From whence did the man come? What was the matter with the man?—3. Where did the man commonly abide? What could nobody do to him? What could not bind him?—4. What had he often been bound with? What did he do to the chains? What did he do to the fetters? What could they not do to him?—Where did he frequent? At what times was he in the mountains and tombs? What is it said he did?—5. Whom did he see? Where did he see him? What did he do?—6. To whom did he cry? How did he cry? What did he call Jesus? By whom did he adjure Christ? What did he request Christ not to do?—7. Who had spoken to the man? What had Christ ordered to come out of him?—8. What did Jesus ask

aim? Who answered this question? What did he say was his name? Why was his name Legion?—10. Who besought Christ? What did the devils desire him not to do?—11. What animals were feeding there? Where were they feeding?—12. Who besought Christ? What did they request?—13. Who gave them leave? From whom did the unclean spirits go out? *Into what did they enter?* Where did the herd run? How many were there? What became of them?—14. Who fled when they saw this? To whom did they tell this circumstance? What did the people in the city and country do? For what did they go out?—15. To whom did they come? Whom did they see sitting? In what condition did they find him? What effect had this sight on them?—16. Who related the particulars to them? What did they tell him?—17. What did they request Jesus to do?—18. Who followed Christ to the ship? What did he request of him? Where was Jesus when the man asked this?—19. What did Jesus do? *Whither did he bid him go? What did he bid him tell?* Who had shewed him compassion?—20. Who departed? What did he publish? Where did he publish this? What effect had this on the people?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 2. *A man with an unclean spirit*, A man possessed by a devil, or many devils; God at this time permitting Satan to take possession of the bodies of certain individuals, for the purpose of exhibiting the malice of Satan to men, and the superior power of Jesus, the Son of God, in casting him out.

7. *I adjure thee*, I earnestly entreat thee. A request under the sanction of an oath.

9. *Legion*; a legion of warriors in the Roman army amounted to about five thousand men.

10. *Besought him much*, Used frequent and earnest entreaties.

13. *The herd*, The swine which were feeding together in a body.—*Violently*, With great force and swiftness.

15. *Right mind*, Cured of his madness, which had been caused by the possession of the devil.

16. *How it befel*, What had taken place.

17. *Their coasts*, Their country.

19. *Compassion*, Pity.

20. *Publish in Decapolis*, Publicly to declare through the country of Decapolis, or the ten cities.—*Did marvel*, Wondered.

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn,

That our exertions for the good of souls, must not be bounded by mountains or seas.—“As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men,” ver. 1.

That in every change of situation or circumstance, we may expect corresponding difficulties and trials peculiar to each. Our Lord is crowded and fatigued on one side of the lake, and is now opposed by devils and ungodly men on the other, ver. 2.

That Satan is always on the alert to oppose, and if possible to destroy, the very commencement of reformation or usefulness. Our Lord is “*immediately*” met by the man with the unclean spirit, ver. 2.

That all the blandishments of sin, and the plausibilities of Satan, who sometimes puts on the appearance of an angel of light, are mere delusions and false pretences. He is still an “unclean spirit,” and defiles and destroys all over whom he assumes the power, ver. 2.

That the power and the goodness of God towards us, are more constant and beneficial in preserving us from the attacks of Satan, than in preserving us from the assaults of our fellow men. ver. 2

That Satan and sin are the true cause of all misery, both temporal and spiritual. Their victims are dwelling among the tombs; living in “darkness, and in the region of the shadow of death,” ver. 3.

That great abilities, or superior power, cease to be blessings, when they are the cause of removing us from the controul or restraints of our own consciences, or the opinion and advice of our friends, ver. 3.

That power possessed by the emissaries of Satan, renders them miserable and wretched in themselves, obnoxious and hateful to their families and friends, and pests and a terror to all around them, ver. 4.

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That as Christ came to do good, and bestow blessings on men, we ought to follow his example, and go about continually doing good, ver. 18, 19.

That there is a certain time allotted us for accepting the gospel ; which, if allowed to pass unimproved, will never be granted to us again, ver. 19.

That as *this year* is to us the acceptable year of the Lord, we ought instantly, and cheerfully, to accept of his terms, ver. 19.

That we ought frequently to reflect on the word of God, and always endeavour to understand its meaning, ver. 20.

That silence and attention are the duty of hearers in the assemblies of God's people, ver. 20.

That fixing our eyes on a teacher, is one great means of securing our attention to his instructions, ver. 20.

That we ought to make ourselves well acquainted with the truths of the Bible, if we would wish to profit by their explanation, ver. 21.

That a personal application of the truths of Scripture is absolutely necessary to our improvement by them, ver. 21.

That we ought always to be attentive to the circumstances of providence, and take notice of the fulfilment of God's gracious promises in them, ver. 21.

That the fulfilment of Scripture promises ought not only to reach the ear, but the heart ; and we ought never to be satisfied, till we find them fulfilled in our own experience, ver. 21.

That a mere assent to the truths of the gospel is not true religion.—“ Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven,” ver. 22.

That the wicked are often constrained to bear witness to the loveliness of the gospel, and the amiableness of its followers, though they hate them both in their hearts, ver. 22.

That people will often wonder at the gracious truth the gospel, who have no desire to partake of its blessings, ver. 22.

That prejudices excited against ministers and teachers are a very common device of Satan, for cheating sinners of their souls, ver. 22.

That we ought never to be prejudiced by the outward appearance or manner of our teachers, lest we should reject those important truths which they are sent by God to deliver, ver. 22.

That the remembrance of former weaknesses in the people of God, will excite wicked men to disparage even the religion which they now profess, ver. 22.

That God is sovereign in all his dealings with men
"He doeth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth," ver. 23.

That we ourselves are not to reject the gospel, because it is not granted so liberally to others, ver. 23.

That the declarations of God to our souls, ought not to appear less important, because of our familiarity with the messengers who deliver them, ver. 24.

That we ought always to cherish respect and reverence for the messengers of the truth.—We must "esteem them very highly for *their work's sake*," ver. 24.

That every slighting thought or expression, against the teachers of the gospel, is a manifest injury done to our own souls, ver. 24.

That God commonly passes by formalists and hypocrites to exhibit himself in mercy and grace to prodigals and strangers.—He is often "found of them who seek him not," ver. 25.

That God's judgments upon nominal professors, are frequently overruled for good to the souls of strangers, ver. 25—27.

That God's sovereignty in preferring others to ourselves, is one great cause of the rebellious working of the heart against him, ver. 28.

That the truths of the gospel, while they humble the saint will harden the sinner.—To the one "they are

SECT. 9. *Christ's Visit to Nazareth.* 47

the savour of life unto life; to the other, the savour of death unto death," ver. 28.

That the effect of the truths of the gospel on the impenitent, is to make them drive Christ from them, ver. 29

That hatred and rejection of the truths of the gospel, generally lead to the persecution of its professors, ver. 29.

That prejudices indulged against the people of God, will sometimes lead to final apostasy from God himself, ver. 29.

That sin is like the letting out of water;—when it is "rolled as a sweet morsel under the tongue" for a moment, no one can tell what shall be the end, ver. 29.

That they who reject the gospel, and hate the purity of its doctrines and duties, are in the fair way to atheism.—They would destroy God if they could, ver. 29.

That the power of the wicked is under the check and controul of God.—He says, "Thus far shalt thou come, and no farther," ver. 30.

That the impotent rage of the wicked, will at last end in their own shame and everlasting confusion, ver. 30.

That the people of God need never be afraid of the rage of their enemies.—They are at all times in God's hand, who "maketh the wrath of men to praise him, and the remainder thereof he doth restrain," ver. 30.

That discouragement in one place, ought not to check our exertions in Christ's cause. It may change the scene of our operations, but must not stop them, ver. 31.

That the Sabbath days especially, ought to be set apart for teaching and being taught the things of God, ver. 31.

That attention to the teaching of Christ in his word, will always produce, in the humble Christian, astonishment at the condescending goodness and mercy of God, ver. 32.

That it is only when the word of Christ is accompanied by the power of the Spirit, that saving influences follow to his people, ver. 32.

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That as teachers may declare the doctrines of Christ, but cannot confer the powers to believe; both teachers and hearers ought to look up to God, by prayer, for his blessing, that he would send his Spirit upon them, "as rain upon the mown grass, and as showers that water the earth," ver. 32.

SECTION X.

Miraculous draught of Fishes.—Luke v. 1—11

NARRATIVE.

JESUS having gone over all Galilee, went to his home, and the disciples seem to have betaken themselves for a time to their trade of fishing. One day, while preaching on the shores of the lake of Gennesaret, the people pressed on him so much, that he had to go into a ship belonging to Peter, where he could more conveniently preach to the people as they stood on the shore. After he was done teaching, he desired Peter to take the ship into the deep water, and let down the net. This was done, and at one draught, caught such a quantity of fishes, as filled that ship and another almost to sinking. The disciples were so astonished at this miracle, having been fishing all night without success, that when they had brought their ship and its cargo to land, they left all, and followed him.

After this, our Lord cured a man afflicted with leprosy, desiring him to shew himself to the priest, but to tell no man who had cured him. His not attending to this injunction, but publishing the matter abroad, caused such a crowd to follow our Lord, as obliged him to leave the place.—(Luke v. 12—16.—Mark i. 40—45.)

EXERCISE.

Ver. 1. About whom did the people press? For what did they press upon Jesus? Where was he at this time?
—2. What did he see by the lake? What were the

SECT. 10. *Miraculous Draught of Fishes.* 49

fishermen doing? From what had the fishermen gone out?—3. Where did Jesus go? *To whom did the ship belong?* What did he ask Simon to do? Where did he sit down? What did he do?—4. Whither did he bid Simon take the ship? When did he bid him do this? What was he to do with the nets?—5. Who returned him an answer? What did he call Jesus? What did he say they had been doing? How long had they toiled? What had they caught? What did he say they would do? Why would he then let down the nets?—6. *What did they inclose?* When did they inclose those fishes? What happened to their nets?—7. To whom did they beckon? Where were they? For what did they beckon them? Who came to help them? What did they fill? With what did they fill the ships? What is said of the ships when thus filled?—8. What did Peter do? What made him fall down at Jesus's knees? What did he bid Christ do? Why was he to depart from him?—9. What is it said that Peter was? Who else were astonished? At what were they astonished?—10. Who are particularly mentioned as being astonished besides Peter? Whose sons were James and John? How were they connected with Peter? Whom did Jesus bid not to fear? What was Peter henceforth to do?—11. What did they bring to land? *What did they then do?* Whom did they follow?

. EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 1. *Pressed upon him*, Crowded him.—*Lake of Genesaret*, Sometimes called the Sea of Tiberias, a large body of standing water, such as is called in Scotland a loch.

2. *Two ships*, Small ships or fishing boats.

3. *Prayed him*, Requested him.—*Thrust out*, Push his boat a little into the sea.

4. *Launch out into the deep*, Sail the boat out to the deep water.—*Draught*, As many fish as are caught in a net at one time.

5. *Toiled*, Worked hard.—*Nevertheless*, Though this has been the case.

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6. *Multitude*, Great number.

7. *Beckoned*, Made signs.

9. *Astonished*, Greatly surprised.

10. *Partners*, Had a share of whatever fishes were caught by each other.—*Henceforth*, From this time.—*Catch men*, Save them from eternal death by the preaching of the gospel.

11. *Forsook all*, Left all.

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn—

That the preaching of the gospel, is a declaration of God ; a message of mercy from heaven to men, ver. 1.

That the truths in the Bible, once known and believed to be the “ Word of God ;” will always make men press forward to know more of them, ver. 1.

That though the house of God is the appointed place to hear the “ Word of God ;” yet the awakened soul will rejoice to hear the message of mercy, wherever, and whenever it is declared, ver. 1.

That an increasing desire in hearers to attend to the “ Word of God,” should stir up his people to greater diligence in communicating the truths of the gospel to them, ver. 1.

That the people of God must not be too scrupulous and dainty in studying their own convenience and comforts, when awakened and perishing souls cry to them for instruction and help, ver. 1.

That those things of which we make no present use ourselves, should, if necessary, be made useful to others, ver. 2.

That spiritual blessings will often be found accompanying industrious habits, and the faithful performance of secular duties, ver. 2.

That ordinary forms may be dispensed with on extraordinary occasions.—When the synagogue cannot contain the hearers, the sea shore and the ship are our Lord's substitutes, ver. 3.

That worldly goods should never appear so valuable, as

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when used in the service of Christ, in propagating the gospel, and benefiting souls, ver. 3.

That in all our religious exercises, we ought to make such previous arrangements as will prevent distraction in our own minds, and best secure from interruption from others. "He pushed out a little farther from the land," ver. 3.

That those who cannot themselves declare the gospel, may materially assist its dissemination, by preventing interruption or inconvenience to those who do declare it, ver. 3.

That the posture of the body, in the service of God, may, without impropriety, be regulated by convenience or the customs of the place.—Our Lord sat down and taught, which was the custom of the Jews; Paul stood on Mars' hill, which was the custom of the Athenians, ver. 3.—(See Acts xvii. 22.)

That the homeliness or novelty of a teacher's situation or circumstances, must not prevent our profiting by his lessons.—Our Lord had an attentive auditory, though he preached to them from a ship, ver. 3.

That the secular affairs of ourselves and others ought never to obtrude themselves on our minds in religious exercises.—It was not till Jesus had left speaking, he gave his directions to Peter, ver. 4.

That though we may be left for a time to mourn the apparent inattention of our Lord to our concerns yet, if engaged in his service, he will yet come to give us special instances of his love and favour.—Peter was in the boat, and our Lord's attention for a time was altogether taken up with the people on the shore; but Peter's turn came, when he had his Lord to himself, and received a special mark of his favour and love, ver. 4.

That laying aside for a time our worldly matters for Christ's sake, will ultimately not lose its reward.—"They shall receive manifold more, even in this life," ver. 4.

That though it is easy for God to give his people whatever

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blessings he pleases, without inconvenience or trouble, yet he requires them to use the appointed and ordinary means of their attainment, while he renders those means successful by his blessing.—“Launch out into the deep, and let down the nets,” ver. 4.

That want of success, which should increase our exertions, is frequently, but very improperly, made an excuse for indifference and sloth, ver. 5.

That the people of God must not be discouraged though for a long time they labour in vain. Their duty is to use the means; God only can command the blessing, ver. 5.

That all discouragements must give way to the commandments of Christ. Though as yet we may have been unsuccessful, “Nevertheless at his word,” we should try it again, ver. 5.

That prompt obedience to the commandments of Christ, will always be followed by his approbation and blessing, ver. 6.

That the very abundance of our success is sometimes the cause of inroads on our happiness. Their nets brake, ver. 6.

That small inconveniences, ought always to be contemplated by the side of our rich mercies. The “nets brake,” but the draught of fishes much more than made up for the loss, ver. 6.

That we ought always to be ready to assist our brethren, when they require our help, ver. 7.

That God’s blessings are so many and so great, that his people in their imperfect state in this world, are unable fully to enjoy them. He sometimes “pours out a blessing, till there be not room to hold,” ver. 7.

That when God is abundantly showering down his blessings upon us, and around us, we ought to induce others to come and partake of his mercy, ver. 7.

That success in worldly matters is often dangerous.—When men fill their boats too full, they become ready to sink, ver. 7.

That the people of God are at all times under his care;

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Their boats may be "ready to sink," but they shall not sink, ver. 7.

That the kindness and mercy of God, contrasted with our ingratitude, is always the cause of deep humility to his people. They "heap coals of fire on the head," ver. 8.

That the conviction of sin in an unsanctified heart, will drive the sinner farther from God; but a sense of unworthiness, in the light of the gospel, brings us to his feet, and makes us wonder that a holy and righteous God does not depart from us, ver. 8.

That the desires of God's people, in so far as they would do them harm, are graciously refused by their heavenly Father, ver. 8.

That the wonders of Christ's goodness ought to stir us up to self-examination, confession, and repentance, ver. 9.

That outward appearances are not always correct indications of inward affections; all the disciples were struck with astonishment, though Peter alone gave evidence of its operations, ver. 9.

That we should endeavour to make the partners of our temporal concerns, partakers also of our spiritual privileges, ver. 10.

That humility and self-abasement is the high way to preferment and honour, "Thou shalt catch men," ver. 10.

That a humbling sense of sin and unworthiness on the part of God's people, is followed by a "Fear not," on the part of God.—"He that confesseth his sins, and forsaketh them, shall find mercy," ver. 10.

That familiar figures of speech, taken from the occupation or circumstances of those we address, are one great mean for their improvement, ver. 10.

That success in worldly matters, instead of enticing us to forsake God that we may enjoy them, ought to make his people more ready to leave all for his sake, ver. 1.

That our religious duties are to be conducted with wis-

dom and prudence. They brought their ships to land and then they followed him, ver. 11.

That forsaking the world is not enough, unless we follow Christ.—We must not only cease to do evil but we must also learn to do well, ver. 11.

SECTION XL.

The Sea Calmed.—Luke viii. 22—25.

See also Mat. viii. 23. and Mark iv. 35.

NARRATIVE.

JESUS, crowded by the multitude around him, and fatigued with his unceasing exertions, went with his disciples into a ship, to cross to the other side of lake of Gennesaret. On the voyage he fell fast asleep when a great storm of wind arose, which raised waves so high as to dash into the boat, and almost fill it with water. The disciples, in great distress, awoke our Lord; who, with a word made the winds cease, and the raging of the waves settle down at once to a great calm. They shortly after arrived safely at the other side of the lake in the country of Gadara.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 22. Into what did Jesus go? Who went with him? To whom did he speak? *What did he wish to cross? What were they to go over? What did he do?*—23. Who fell asleep? When did he fall asleep? What came down on the lake? What was filled with water? What is said of their situation?—24. Who came to him? *What did they do? What did they say to him? What did they say of themselves? Who was this? Who arose? What did he do? What came to him? What is said of the sea when he had done this?*—25. To whom did our Lord speak? What did he ask the disciples? *What is said the disciples were? What did they say? What did they ask at each other? What did they*

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 is commanded? What effect did they say this produced on the winds and the water?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 22. *Disciples, Scholars, or followers.—Launched forth,* Thrust the ship, or boat, into the sea, and sailed away.

23. *They were filled with water,* The boat in which they were was almost filled with water, by the dashing of the waves—*Jeopardy,* Great danger of their lives.

24. *We perish,* We are in danger of being drowned.—*Rebuked the wind and the raging of the sea,* Commanded the wind to cease, and the sea to be calm.

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn,

That in our retirements, whether for relaxation, or devotion, we should always have Christ with us, as our teacher, companion, and friend, ver. 22.

That they who themselves enjoy the blessings and the hopes of the gospel, should consider the situation of their brethren who are less highly favoured. Let us send it to those also “on the other side,” ver. 22.

That in inviting others to do good, we ought to set them the example. We are not to say, “Go ye over,” but “Let us go over,” ver. 22.

That every call in providence to be useful to others, should be met by instant compliance, “They launched forth,” ver. 22.

That the consolations and peace of the Christian are beyond the reach of Satan, or the world. He can repose with undisturbed tranquility amidst the raging of the storm, or on the brink of eternity, ver. 23.

That difficulties and dangers may be expected in the performance of duty. “Through much tribulation, we are called to inherit the promises, ver. 23.

That though Christ, for the trial of our faith and patience, may sometimes appear insensible to our danger; yet he is always at hand, though we perceive it not, and will awake to our rescue, when it is needful or

proper. "He that keepeth Israel, neither slumbereth nor sleeps," ver. 23.

That the voyage of benevolence, or the path of duty, is not exempted from the natural calamities of life, and that the wind will blow, and the waves will be troubled, as well to the good man as to others. But the direction, the extent, and the effect of these are of God. He is to every storm and trouble, "Thus far shall I come, and no farther," ver. 23.

That every fear, or apprehension of danger, should lead us directly to Christ. "They came to him," ver. 23.

That apprehension of danger ought always to rouse the sinner to activity, and give urgency to prayer. "Master, Master! we perish," ver. 24.

That prayer is the best way of regaining a consciousness of the gracious presence and care of Christ. "They awoke him, saying, Master, Master, waken us!" ver. 24.

That the answer to prayer will be given by God at the proper time, and in the manner which he sees best for his own glory, and the good of his people,—"*Thou shalt arise,*" &c. ver. 24.

That uncommon earnestness in prayer, usually procures great deliverances to Christ's church or people, ver. 24.

That though the voyage of life lies through both elements, and over a tempestuous sea,—that we are under the management and controul of a kind Father who will at last guide his people to their desired haven, where they shall enjoy an eternal rest, a permanent calm, ver. 24.

That calamities and trials are appointed to the Christian for detecting the weakness of his faith, and the necessity and power of God in removing them, ver. 24.

That the strength or weakness of our faith, is to be known by its exercise, ver. 25.

That we ourselves are very imperfect judges of our spiritual attainments. God often sees our faith weak, or even wanting, when we consider it both lively and strong, ver. 25.

That great deliverances may sometimes be accom-

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ioned by dislike to its more essential truths, conviction of our neglect of its most important a, ver. 20.

ere *talking* about religion is no sure sign of ality in the heart.—“By their *works* ye shall them,” ver. 20.

e Gospel is designed for the benefit of all man- in all parts of the world, ver. 21.

ie worship of God is not confined to particular or places; but all are accepted of him, who wor- m in spirit, and in the true way of his own ap- ment, through Jesus Christ, ver. 21.

any *think* they are worshipping God, while, by ignorance of his nature, perfections, or gospel, worship “they know not what,” ver. 22.

he word of God is the only rule of our worship bedience.—They who are acquainted with its a, “*knew* what they worship;” and they who r its directions, will find that “salvation” is of who was promised to, and arose from among, “the,” ver. 22.

is gospel is the perfect day, of which the Jewish nsation was but the dawn, ver. 23.

are outward form and ceremony in religious du- re not worship. The heart must be engaged, 23, 24.

a worshipping God, we ought to be more careful r inward frame than of outward forms, ver. 24.

the Messiah is designed to tell us all things, we t to make ourselves acquainted with all that he aid, and to obey him in all, ver. 25.

vague and undefined notion of Christ and the al, without a personal acquaintance with him and octrines, will neither interest the heart, nor re- the life, ver. 25.

direct revelation of Christ to the sinner, by his Spirit, is necessary for the conversion of the soul or turning him from darkness to light, ver. 26.

SECTION IX.

Christ's Visit to Nazareth.—Luke iv. 16—32.

NARRATIVE.

JESUS having come into Galilee, cured a Nobleman's son who was lying sick in Capernaum, (John iv. 46—54.) and then went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up.—Here he went on the Sabbath-day into the synagogue, read the Scriptures, and declared that the prophecy concerning the Messiah was fulfilled.—Remembering him among themselves a boy, the reputed son of a carpenter, they were offended at him; and when he reproached them for their unbelief, they laid hold of him to put him to death; but he miraculously passing through among them unobserved, went his way, and dwelt in Capernaum, (Matt. iv. 13.) Near this place, on a mountain, he preached his sermon, recorded Mat. v. vi. and vii. cleansed a leper, (Mat. viii. 1—5.) cured the Centurion's servant, (Mat. viii. 5—14.) and afterwards healed the demoniac, Peter's mother-in-law, and several others. He then departed on a tour through Galilee, (Mark i. 22—39.)

EXERCISE.

Ver. 16. Where was Jesus brought up? What was his custom on the Sabbath day? Into what synagogue did he, at this time, go? What did he do in the synagogue?—17. *What was delivered to him?* What did he do with it?—18. Where is the passage he read to be found? (See Isa. lxi. 1, 2.) What does the prophet say was upon him? What was he anointed to do? When was he sent to heal? To whom was he to preach deliverance? What was he to do to the blind? What was he to do to the bruised?—19. What was he to preach?—20. What did Jesus do when he had read this? To whom did he give it? What did he then do? Whose eyes were fastened on him?—21. *What did he say was fulfilled?*—When was it fulfilled? Who heard

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fulfilment?—22. What did all the people do? At
 did they wonder? What question did they ask at
 ther?—23. What proverb did our Lord say they
 use towards him? Where had they heard of him
 ig miracles? Where did he suppose they would
 im to do the same? 24. What did our Lord say
 prophets? Where were they not accepted—25.
 did he say were in Israel? When were these
 s in Israel? What happened at that time? How
 ere the heavens shut up? What was the conse-
 , of this? 26. To whom was Elias sent? Where
 alive? What was Sarepta?—27. What does he
 re in Israel? When were these lepers in Israel?
 leper was cleansed?—28. Who heard these things?
 effect had they upon them?—29. What did they
 Whence did they thrust him? Whither did they
 im? What is said of this hill? *What did they*
to do?—30. Did they cast him down? How
 escape?—31. Whither did he go? What was
 saum? What did he do there? When did he teach
 —32. At what were they astonished? Why were
 stonished?

EXPLANATIONS

. 16. *Brought up*, Where he had lived from his
 od.—*Synagogue*, A place for public worship a-
 the Jews.

Esaias, Isaiah.

Captives, Slaves, or those who were confined.

Acceptable, Agreeable, worthy to be received.

Eyes were fastened on him, They looked steadily
 earnestly at him.

This Scripture is fulfilled, This part of the holy
 ga, the word of God, is brought to pass. It is done
 s foretold.—*In your ears*, In your hearing.

Bare him witness, Took notice and confessed.—
 us, Kind and favourable.

Proverb, Common saying.—*Physician, heal thyself*,
 ne diseases of those belonging to thine own native
 ether than of strangers.

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24. *Verily, Truly.*—*Accepted, Favourably received.*

25. *Elias, Elijah.*—*Heaven was shut up.* There was no rain.—*Famine, Scarcity of food.*—*Throughout, Over the whole land.*

27. *Lepers, Persons afflicted with a loathsome disease, called leprosy.*—*Eliseus, Elisha.*—*Cleansed, Cured of their leprosy.*

28. *Filled with wrath, Very angry.*

29. *Thrust, Violently forced.*—*Brow, Steep part.*

32. *Astonished, Greatly surprised and wondered.*—*Doctrine, Religious truths which he taught.*

LESSONS.

This Section teaches us,

That we should endeavour to do good to the souls of those who are connected with us, ver. 16.

That we ought regularly to accustom ourselves to meet with the people of God for public worship, ver. 16.

That though it may be our duty and our interest publicly to worship God on any day, yet that this ought to be especially the work of the Sabbath, ver. 16.

That the reading and explaining the word of God, ought always to form part of our public worship on Sabbath days, ver. 16, 17.

That we ought to accommodate each other when attending public worship, ver. 17,

That choice ought to be made of suitable passages to be read or expounded in meetings for public worship, ver. 17.

That the anointing of the Spirit of God is necessary to useful and acceptable labours in his service, ver. 18.

That the gospel is suited to people in every rank and condition; and therefore, ought to be welcomed and received by all, ver. 18.

That the peculiar feature of the gospel is to destroy the effects of sin, and the works of the devil, ver. 18.

That as sin is the sole cause of all misery, and the gospel the only means of its removal, we ought to make the possession of its blessings our first and greatest concern, ver. 18.

That mere human restraints are no security against the malice of Satan, or those under his influence. Chains and fetters forged by man, are "plucked asunder," and "broken to pieces." God alone can controul their malice. "He maketh the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder thereof he doth restrain," ver. 4.

That the wicked, while unrenewed by the Spirit of God, and under the influence of Satan, are "wild and untamable." Though they may boast of their talents, and their taste, and their acquirements, they are in the estimation of God more degraded than the beasts that perish, and beyond the reach of human effort.—"No man can tame them;" God only can, ver. 4.

That there is no solid happiness, nor enjoyment to the wicked. The gloss and the glare of worldly prosperity, and the enjoyment of sensual indulgences, are but delusive and feverish dreams, like the crackling of thorns under a pot. The solitary mountain, and the melancholy tomb, correspond to their present enjoyments, as the loathsome carcase, and the gnawing worm, are the true emblems of their future prospects, and miserable hopes, ver. 5.

That the misery and wretchedness of the wicked should be a warning to others. Their "crying" ought to make us hear, and avoid the rock on which they have split, ver. 5.

That Satan can only *tempt men* to destroy themselves, but has no power himself to destroy them. It was not Satan, but the man at the suggestion of Satan, who "cut himself with stones," ver. 5.

That if a sight of Christ can controul and humble his most inveterate enemies, we should be anxious to point him out to those who as yet "knew him not," ver. 6.

That a view of Christ, even while at a distance, when accompanied with power, is more efficacious in drawing souls to himself, than nearer and more frequent communications when that power is withheld, ver. 5. (Compare with ver. 17.)

That Satan always attempts to persuade men that religion will destroy their happiness, or render them miserable. They are thus tempted to shun its observan-

ces lest they should be "tormented before the time," ver. 7.

That the proud and the powerful sinner will at last be humbled to the footstool of Christ. They who break every chain and fetter of moral obligation, stifle the suggestions of conscience, proudly deny the authority of the Son of God, and are ready to say, "What have we to do with thee," will at last be humbled in his presence, and be constrained to submit to his power, ver. 7.

That a mere acknowledgment of Christ as the "Son of the most high God," is not saving faith. The devils also "believe and tremble." We must believe in him as the Son of God, and as *our Saviour*; which belief, if genuine, will "constrain us," to live "not unto ourselves, but to him who died for us, and rose again." True saving faith "worketh by love," ver. 7.

That the word and power of Christ alone can destroy the influence of sin and Satan in the heart and affections. "Come out of him, thou unclean spirit," ver. 8.

That if one man was possessed with a *legion* of devils, the number of evil spirits, those enemies to God and man, must be very great. Let us place ourselves under the protection of Christ before whom *all the devils* tremble, ver. 9.

That there is no limit to the power of Christ. The same still small voice which soothes and comforts his disciples, possesses power to cast out even a legion of devils, ver. 9.

That Satan delights in those societies and countries where covetousness and worldly mindedness are most prevalent; "Send us not out of *this country*," where the people are so ready to abandon heaven to preserve their property, and will reject Christ for the sake of their swine, ver. 10.

That Satan is a chained enemy. He cannot lift a finger against the weakest, or the most timorous of the children of the kingdom, nor so much as hurt one of the brute creation, without permission from God, ver. 12.

That selfish prayers for wicked purposes are "an abomination to the Lord." They render men still more

wicked, and make them liker to Satan, who is always ready to suggest them, ver. 12.

That Satan is still the old serpent,—subtile as well as cruel. If he can be permitted to destroy the swine, he will try to make that the means of ruining the souls of their worldly-minded owners, ver. 12.

That evil is only *permitted* by God. It is Satan and wicked men alone who do evil of their own choice; and they would do a thousand times more, were they not restrained and checked by the omnipotence and wisdom of God. “He gave them *leave*,” ver. 13.

That Satan is restrained, even in his dealings with the wicked. Were he left at liberty to deal with those ungrateful men, who insult the very God who protects them, swift and irremediable destruction would be the consequence to them, as it was here to the swine, ver. 13.

That a knowledge of the enmity and cruelty of Satan, should awaken us to a sense of our own danger, and make us flee from his power; “They fled,” ver. 14.

That when convictions of sin, and fears for the soul, drive men back to the world and *away* from Christ, the case of these men is more hopeless than it was before. These men fled from Christ to their worldly companions; and the consequence was, that they joined together, and encouraged each other in their rejection of him, ver. 14.

That temporary convictions in worldly men, will sometimes excite the attention of others, and be the means of drawing them to Jesus Christ. “They *told it* in the city and the country,” and “*they came out to see*,” ver. 14.

That those who are the willing servants of Satan are not “in their right mind.” Ungodly men are *fools*, however great in their intellectual acquirements, or pure in their moral habits. “The fear of the Lord is the *beginning* of wisdom,” ver. 15.

That an inward change of heart will always produce an outward change of conduct and life. This man when restored to his “right mind,” is found also “clothed,”

and "sitting" at the feet of Jesus learning instruction, ver. 15.

That the displays of God's greatness and power in the conversion of sinners, while they make the good man happy, make the wicked man afraid, ver. 15.

That the dissemination of religious knowledge is both our interest and our duty. "They who saw it told them" who had not had the opportunity, ver. 16.

That worldly minded men will always be more deeply affected by temporal losses, than by spiritual gains. They no doubt told "how it befel him that was possessed of the devil;" but they wound up their narration by the loss of the swine, ver. 16.

That the fear of worldly loss, is a great obstacle to the reception of the gospel. On hearing of the loss of the swine, they immediately "began to pray him to depart," ver. 16, 17.

That "we cannot serve God and mammon." The Gadarenes were determined to cleave to the world, and they must therefore give up Christ. "They prayed him to depart out of their coasts," ver. 17.

That covetousness will work the destruction of a soul, as effectually, and sometimes more surely, than the most abandoned profligacy.—*The sober citizens reject Christ, while he that was possessed of the devils, sits humbled at his feet, ver 17.*

That the answer to a wicked and selfish prayer, is the heaviest curse to an ungodly man. "They prayed him to depart," from whom alone they could derive happiness and peace, ver. 17.

That the obduracy of the wicked is the ruin of a country. These worldlings banished our Lord from "their coasts," and thus deprived *all the rest of their countrymen* of the benefits of his healing power, and sanctifying influences, ver. 17.

That we should be careful to embrace *every opportunity* of improvement. To many of the Gadarenes this might be the last opportunity of salvation,—yet they neglected it, ver. 17.

That a change of heart produces a change of sentiments regarding the Saviour. He who but a few hours be-

fore was found crying out, "What have I to do with thee?" is now mourning his departure, and desiring "to be with him," ver. 18.

That while Christ in just judgment *answers the prayers of the wicked*, he sometimes, in great mercy, *refuses the desires of the righteous*. He answered the prayer of those who desired his absence, and refused the desire of him who wished to be with him, ver. 19.

That there are times when it is both our interest and our duty to deny ourselves opportunities of spiritual improvement. The calm retirement and serenity of a Sabbath evening may be sweet to the Christian, and earnestly desired; yet may in mercy to themselves and others, be refused. "Howbeit, Jesus *suffered him not*; but saith unto him, Go home to thy worldly and ungodly friends," or those children who have none to instruct them, "and tell them" the things which belong to their peace, ver. 19.

That personal experience of the goodness of God to our souls, will make us desirous to declare his kindness to others, not to our friends only, but also to strangers. This man published through all *Decapolis*, (or the ten cities,) the things concerning the Lord Jesus, ver. 20.

That the former condition and character of God's people, ought not to prevent their usefulness, or be the cause of throwing contempt on the message which they deliver from God, ver. 20.

That the gospel may make men marvel, who will not believe.—Let us not only wonder at its truths, but let us also take the benefit of its promises, ver. 20.

SECTION XIII.

Matthew's Calling and Feast.—Luke v. 27—32.

See also Matth. ix. 9.—Mark ii. 13.

NARRATIVE.

JESUS, after leaving the country of Gadara, was teaching in a house in Capernaum, where he cured a man *sick of the palsy*, whom the people had to let down through

the roof of the house, (Matth. ix. 1—8. Mark ii. 1—12. Luke v. 17.) Afterwards passing along the streets, he saw a man named Matthew, or Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom, whom he desired to follow him, and become his disciple; which he did. Levi, shortly afterwards, made a great feast in honour of Jesus, and invited a number of his fellow publicans, who were all considered bad men and sinners by the rest of the Jews. The Scribes and Pharisees particularly, were offended to see one who assumed the office of a prophet, keeping such company at a feast in a publican's house, and complained of it to our Lord's disciples. The answer of Christ was, that he came for the purpose of benefiting the sinful children of Adam.—“I came, not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

EXERCISE.

Ver. 27. Who went forth? Whom did he see? What was his name? *Where did he see him?* Who spake to him? What did Jesus bid him do? Whom was he to follow?—28. What did he leave? Who rose up? What did he then do? Whom did he follow? Who followed Jesus?—29. What was made? Who made this feast? For whom did he make it? Where did he make this feast? *Who were at this feast?* What did the publicans and others do? With whom did they sit down?—30. Who murmured? Against whom did they murmur? Against whose disciples did they murmur? Who did they say ate and drank? With whom did they say they ate and drank?—31. Who answered? To whom did he speak? *Who did he say needed no physician? Who needed the physician?*—32. Who came? Whom did he come to call? Whom did he not come to call? To what did he call sinners?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 27. *A publican*, A tax-gatherer, generally persons of bad character, and greatly despised by their countrymen the Jews.—*Receipt of custom*, The house, or temporary booth, where Matthew commonly collected the customs.

30. *Scribes*, Those whose chief employment was to

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and Feast.

v,

write copies of the Scriptures, and explain them to the people.—*Pharisees*, A sect of the Jews, who made great pretensions to superior sanctity and strictness in observing the law of Moses.—*Murmured*, Complained privately.—*Disciples*, Scholars or followers.—*Publicans and sinners*, Tax-gatherers, and those who kept company with them, who were generally the worst of the people.

31. *They that are whole*, They that have no complaint, or are ignorant of any.

32. *I came not to call the righteous*, Those who are self-righteous, and will not be convinced of their need of a Saviour.—*Sinners*, Those who feel the burden of sin, and perceive the danger of their condition.—*Repentance*, Sorrow for sin, and sincere resolution of amendment.

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn,

That there is no respect of persons with God. Every station and rank, character and occupation, are alike within the range of his goodness and mercy. Saul the persecutor, and Levi the publican, are not only called, converted, and saved, but are raised to the rank of apostles, and preachers of the gospel, ver. 27.

That a diligent performance of present duty, however humble, will prepare the way for future and more extensive blessings. Levi, while diligent in his worldly occupation, is called by his Lord to be a spiritual instructor, ver. 27.

That God frequently passes over nominal professors, and plausible hypocrites, and effectually calls those who, like Levi, are hated and despised by their fellow-men. "Publicans and harlots enter into the kingdom of Heaven," before the self-righteous and proud Pharisee and Scribe, ver. 27.

That Christ is sometimes found of them who sought him not. Levi, while his thoughts are engaged only on collecting custom, is called by Christ to disseminate the gospel, ver. 27.

That the Word of Christ is as instantaneous and powerful in overcoming avarice and pride, as in stilling the

winds, and in casting out devils. "Follow me; and immediately he arose, and followed him," ver. 27.

That the followers of Christ are called to diligence and activity in the performance of duty. Levi is found "sitting" at the receipt of custom; but when he was called of Christ, "he rose up and followed him," ver. 28. That the excellency of Christ to the believing soul, will induce him to count all things else but dross for his sake. Levi, a rich publican, and engaged in a lucrative employment, "leaves all, and follows his Lord," ver. 28.

That pious resolutions ought immediately to be carried into effect. Levi's resolution is no sooner formed, than he immediately "left all, rose up, and followed him," ver. 28.

That gratitude to God for spiritual blessings, will make his followers willing to dedicate their worldly goods to the extension of his glory, and the good of his people. Levi "made him a feast," ver. 29.

That what is done for God should be done liberally and heartily. Levi makes *feasts* for his friends, but for his Lord he makes "a *great feast*."—"The Lord loveth the cheerful giver," ver. 29.

That the hungry soul will not be satisfied with weekly sacrifices, and public ordinances.—He must have his *daily* supply of manna at home, and feast Christ "with his family, in his own house," ver. 29.

That they who have been plucked "as brands from the fire," will be desirous to recommend Christ to their former companions in sin, ver. 29.

That the followers of Christ should study to be wise in their generation, and suit the means of doing good to the persons they wish to benefit. Some would be found at Levi's *Feast*, who would not otherwise have attended at our Lord's *Sermon*, ver 29.

That our intercourse with the men of the world must be carried on *as in the presence of Christ*. He who was without sin, could not be tainted with bad example;—but we may. Let us then have a constant sense of his presence at such times; and so conduct ourselves,

as neither to countenance the wicked in vice, nor be partakers with them in their sins, ver. 29. .

That self-righteousness and pride are great enemies to Christian charity. Christ's love to sinners, and his exertions for their reformation, caused those proud Pharisees to calumniate him as "a gluttonous man and a wine bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners," ver. 30.

That hypocritical professors are always more ready to spy out and criticise the failings of others, than to observe and correct more serious faults in themselves, ver. 30.

That formalists and false professors are more taken up with the outside of religion, than with its spirit and design. While they themselves devour widows houses, and have hearts full of all uncleanness and wickedness, they will be ready to blame the humble and zealous disciple for "eating and drinking" with sinners, though in the discharge of ordinary duty, ver. 30.

That a consciousness of integrity, and a sense of the approbation of God, should prevent us from being over-anxious to vindicate our character from the false aspersions of wicked men. Let us keep steadily on in the line of duty, and *Christ himself will advocate our cause*, and answer our enemies to their everlasting confusion, ver. 31.

That it is sometimes proper to "answer a fool according to his folly." Those Pharisees *thought* that they themselves were "whole," and that the publicans were sinners; and our Lord, taking it for granted, though not admitting it, refutes them by their own argument. "Out of their own mouth he condemns them," ver 31.

That self-righteousness is poison to the soul, and a constant bar to the reception of the gospel. They who *think* themselves "whole," reject the physician; while they who *feel* themselves "sick," rejoice at his approach, and apply his prescriptions, ver. 31.

That as the "refuges of lies," in which the self-righteous hide themselves from the calls of the gospel, are, humanly speaking, more difficult to be penetrated

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than the bold front and open opposition of the ungodly and profane; let us beware of the deceitfulness of our own hearts, and if we think ourselves strong, let it be only "in the Lord;" for by the "works of the law shall no flesh living be justified," ver. 32.

That as we and all men are by nature "sick," we ought never to rest satisfied till we have *felt* our disease, and *secured* the help of Jesus the physician of souls, ver. 32.

That as Christ came to "call sinners," we ought to follow his example, by endeavouring to awaken them to a sense of their danger, and direct them to him in whom alone is salvation, ver. 32.

That without repentance there is no remission of sin. Christ came to reveal the desperate situation of men by sin, and offer relief; that they who believe his report might *repent*, and turn from sin to serve the living and the true God, ver. 32.

SECTION XIV.

Centurion's Servant Healed.—Luke vii. 1—10.

See also Matth. viii. 5—13.

NARRATIVE.

AFTER Matthew's feast, our Lord, in answer to the objections of the disciples of John, as to his disciples not fasting, delivered the parable of the old garment, and the old bottles, (Mark ii. 18—22. Matth. ix. 14—17, an Luke v. 34—39.) and afterwards cured a woman with an issue of blood, and raised the daughter of Jairus to life, (Matth. ix. 18—26. Mark v. 22—43. Luke viii. 41—56.) Departing from the house of Jairus; he cured two blind men, and a man possessed with a devil, (Matth. ix. 27—38.) Chose, and sent out his apostles to preach, (Mark iii. 13—19. Luke vi. 12—16.) and himself preached a sermon on the plain, near to Capernaum, (Luke vi. 17—49.) After this sermon, Jesus having entered into Capernaum, a certain centurion sent some of the elders of the Jews to him, as representing *himself*, with a humble request, that he would come to

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his house, and heal a servant of his who was sick. While on the way, the centurion sent another message, saying, that he was unworthy of the honour of a visit; and desiring Jesus to speak the word only, and his servant would be healed. Jesus, surprised at this instance of faith in a Gentile, did as he was requested; and when the messengers returned to the house, they found the servant perfectly recovered.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 1. What is here said were ended? Where had Jesus ended his sayings? Where did he go?—2. Who was sick? To whom was this servant dear? What was the matter with him? Who was ready to die?—3. Who heard of Jesus? *Whom did he send?* When did he send them? What did he wish Jesus to do?—4. To whom did they come? Who besought him? How did they beseech him? *What did they say?* Do what?—5. What did he love? Who loved their nation? What had he built?—6. With whom did Jesus go? Whom did the centurion send? Where was Jesus when they were sent? Who was not to trouble himself? Why was he not to trouble himself?—7. Of what did he not think himself worthy? What would his servant be? What did he say would heal him?—8. What did he say he was? Whom had he under him? What did he say to one? What effect had this? What did he say to another? What followed this? What did he say to his servant? What did the servant do?—9. Who marvelled? At whom did he marvel? When did he marvel at him? What did Jesus do? To whom did he speak? *What had he not found?* Where had he not found this?—10. Whither did they return? Who returned? Whom did they find? How had he been? How did they now find him?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 1. *Audience*, In the hearing, or presence.—*Capernaum*, A town of Galilee, where Jesus commonly resided.

2. *Centurion's servant*, The servant, or slave of a Roman Captain, called a centurion, because he had the

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command of a hundred men.—*Dear unto him, Was much beloved by him.*

3. *Elders of the Jews*, The rulers of the Synagogue the principal persons in the place.—*Beseeching*, Earnestly desiring.

4. *Besought him instantly*, Very earnestly request him.

5. *Synagogue*, A place for public worship.

6. *Enter under my roof*, Come into my house.

7. *Say in a word*, Speak the word ;—order it to be

8. *Set under authority*, I have power to give orders those under me.

9. *Marvelled*, Wondered.—*Faith*, Belief in me the Messiah.—*No, not in Israel*, Not among the nation of the Jews, the descendants of Jacob, or Israel.

10. *Whole*, Recovered.

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn,

That though public services may require our attent for a time, the duties of home must not be neglected. When our Lord had ended all his public duties "the audience of the people," he returned "to *Cana*," where he usually resided, ver. 1.

That it is both the duty and the interest of servants, their fidelity and attention, to make themselves "due to their masters ; who have much in their power make them comfortable, both in the time of health and of sickness, ver. 2.

That approbation and kindness to a faithful and diligent servant, are as justly their due as any part of their wages. "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal," ver. 2.

That as masters enjoy the benefit of their servants' services in the time of health, they should not be forsaken but tenderly treated, in the time of sickness and distress, ver. 2.

That the favour and patronage of the rich and great are of little value in the time of sickness, or at the hour of death. Though this servant was very "de-

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to the Centurion, yet his influence and authority could not prevent him from being "sick, and ready to die," ver. 2.

That the knowledge of Christ is necessary to true faith. "When he heard of Jesus, he sent," &c. How can they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" ver. 3.

That the bonds of natural affection will sometimes draw those to Christ, who would not otherwise perhaps have applied to him. "What knowest thou, O wife, but thou mayest gain thy husband?" ver. 3.

That it is the duty of parents and superiors to solicit the presence and blessing of Christ, not only for the healing and nourishment of their own souls, but for the souls also of their children and dependants, ver. 3.

That a mistaken view of inability or unworthiness will sometimes induce the people of God very improperly to decline their personal ministrations in the religious exercises of their own family. He who had faith unequalled in Israel, *sent* those to Christ who were of the same sect, and might be the very individuals, who afterwards rejected him, and put him to death, ver. 3.

That formalists and hypocrites may apparently be very earnest, and even successful, in soliciting spiritual blessings for others; while they themselves remain indifferent about possessing them, and have no wish to include themselves in their own petitions, ver. 4.

That the judgment of God, as to the character of individuals, is formed upon very different principles from the judgment of men.—The Jews thought the centurion *worthy*, in proportion to the extent of his charity and his partiality for their own people; whereas Christ's opinion of his character was founded on the deepness of his humility, and the strength of his faith, ver. 4.

That gratitude for benefits which we want ability to return, is best shewn by fervent and frequent applications to God for a blessing on our benefactors, ver. 4.

That love to God, will always produce love to his people. "*He loveth our nation,*" ver. 5.

That the most precious benefit which love can bestow

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on its objects, is an opportunity of religious improvement, "He loveth our nation and hath built us a synagogue," ver. 5.

That they who have made the greatest advances in the divine life, will be most anxious for the spiritual improvement of others, ver. 5.

That the prayer of faith in individuals, will not be rejected by God, because presented through the medium of ungodly men.—"Then Jesus went with them," ver. 6.

That the kindness and condescension of Christ, in hearing and answering the prayers of his people, will always produce in them additional humility and self-abasement, ver. 6.

That a sense of unworthiness should never keep us back from God.—While we recommend Christ to our friends, we ought also to accompany them to Him, who, while he "resisteth the proud, giveth grace to the humble," ver. 6.

That we are too ready to measure the goodness of God by the standard of human weakness.—We soon complain of "trouble," and become "weary in well-doing;" but the Lord "fainteth not neither is weary," ver. 6.

That the greatest blessings may be expected from Christ, when we are most sensible of our unworthiness to receive the least of them, ver. 6.

That they who best deserve the approbation of others, will be most ready to acknowledge their own unworthiness.—"He is worthy," said the Jews; but he himself says, "I thought not myself worthy," ver. 7.

That Christian humility, while it may be both genuine and deep, may, at the same time, be unenlightened, and in so far injurious.—We are indeed unworthy of the least of God's mercies; but when they are freely offered, it is hurting ourselves, and disparaging the condescension and goodness of God for us to refuse them, ver. 7.

That faith in the infinite power of Christ, should raise our expectations, and increase our desires, for blessings and benefits worthy of himself, ver. 7.

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That the obedience which is demanded from servants to earthly masters, ought to make us ashamed of our remissness and negligence in obeying the commandments of our Master in heaven, ver. 8.

That as every disease and trouble is under the direction and controul of our heavenly Father, we ought neither to be impatient at their duration, nor anxious for their result, ver. 8.

That it is just cause of wonder and admiration, when those whose opportunities are few, and their temptations many, outstrip those who, in the course of providence, are more favourably circumstanced, ver. 9.

That grace can spring up and flourish in the most untoward soil, and under the most unpromising circumstances. The faith of this Roman soldier, once a heathen, and a "stranger to the commonwealth of Israel," is held up to the admiration and imitation of the favoured apostles, ver. 9.

That the superior spiritual attainments of others, should be cause of deep humility for our neglect of past religious opportunities, and a strong inducement to diligence and perseverance in improving them for the time to come, ver. 9.

That they who, after holding communion with Christ, are found "returning to their house" in a proper frame, will return to witness still greater instances of his power and love, ver. 10.

That godly masters should, and may be real blessings to their servants; and godly servants may be real blessings to their masters. Here the *servant* is healed for his master's sake; and "the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for *Joseph's sake*," ver. 10.

That as servants will be benefited by the example and the prayers of godly masters, and masters may be blessed and benefited by having godly servants; both should not only be desirous of being themselves religious, but, if possible, they ought not to form a connection with any but those who are so, ver. 10.

SECTION XV.

Widow's Son Raised to Life.—Luke vii. 11—18.

NARRATIVE.

JESUS having cured the Centurion's servant went into a house, supposed to be Peter's, where he commonly dwelt, (See Matt. iv. 13.) He had been with his disciples on the mountain all the previous night, and incessantly employed through the day, and nature required some refreshment. This, however, was prevented by the urgency of the multitude to hear, and to have their sick healed; and our Lord's friends, becoming alarmed for his health, were desirous of moderating his zeal, and putting him under restraint. (Mark iii. 20, 21.)—Jesus now called together the twelve apostles, and gave them power to work miracles. He then sent them out to preach to the Jews, with particular directions how to conduct themselves. (Matt. x. 1—42.)—On the day following, as they were about to enter the city of Nain, they met the funeral procession of a young man, the only son of a widow, who also accompanied it.—Jesus desired the procession to stop; and, having compassion on the distress of this childless widow, he restored the young man to life, and delivered him to his mother.—These miracles produced great admiration in the multitude, who perceived that he was indeed a prophet of God.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 11. Where did our Lord go? When did he go into Nain? Who went with him? Who were with him besides his disciples?—12. What happened when he came nigh the gate? Out of what did they carry the dead man? What was his mother? *What was he?* Who were with her? What city?—13. Who is it said saw her? What had he when he saw her? On whom had he compassion? What did he say to her?—14. What did Jesus do to the bier, or coffin? What did they who *were carrying* it do? Who spake to the dead man?

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What did he call him? What did he bid him do?—15. Who sat up? What did he do when he sat up? To whom was he delivered? Who delivered him to his mother?—16. *What came on all?* Whom did they glorify? What did they say had risen? Where had he risen up? What did they say God had done? Whom had he visited?—17. What went forth? About whom was this rumour? Where was this rumour circulated? Where else besides Judea?—18. Who was shewed of those things? By whom was he shewed those things?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 11. *Disciples*, Scholars and followers.

13. *Compassion*, Pity; a desire to relieve her distress.

14. *Bier*, A wooden frame on which dead bodies were carried to be buried.—*Bare him*, Carried him, viz. the corpse.

16. *Glorified God*, Expressed their thankfulness and wonder at God's goodness.—*Prophet*, One who is specially sent to declare the will of God.—*Visited his people*, Sent this Great Person to his people, as his representative, to bless them, and to do them good.

17. *Rumour*, A report of the circumstances which had taken place.—*Throughout all Judea*, Into every part of the land of Judea.—*Region*, Country.

18. *Shewed him*, Described to him all that had happened.

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn,

That they who profess to be the followers of Christ, must wait on his instructions, and the means he has appointed for their improvement, ver. 11.

That death has no respect either to age or condition. The young as well as the old, the hope of the parent, and the prop of the widow, are equally liable to his stroke, ver. 12.

That when we cannot prevent or remove the afflictions of life, we ought, at least, to afford our sympathy and condolence to those who are visited with them, ver. 12.

78 *Widow's Son raised to Life.* SECT. 16.

That the widow and the destitute ought peculiarly to be the objects of kindness and compassion, ver. 13.

That it is the privilege of Christ's people to be permitted to carry the spiritually dead into his presence by prayer. When he permits their approach, let them plead for Spirit and power to grant them life from the dead, ver. 14.

That the power of Christ is not limited by death, either in body or soul. He who spoke life to the dead man, can with equal ease speak powerfully to the dead soul, and raise it up to newness of life, ver. 14.

That the call of Christ to dead souls should be answered by instant obedience on their part. He who gave power to *hear*, will give power also to *arise*, if the sinner will but hear and obey him, ver. 15.

That newness of life will always be accompanied by new and spiritual language. They will "begin to speak" the praises of God, ver. 15.

That while the power and the majesty of God inspire holy awe and reverence in his people, a sense of his goodness and mercy will excite them to gratitude and praise, ver. 16.

That they who have witnessed the visitations of God, and learned his will at the mouth of his Son, should make his wisdom and mercy known to those who have not been so highly favoured, ver. 17.

That the spread of the gospel is cause of comfort in the midst of affliction. John's door of usefulness was now shut, but he rejoiced that the fame of his Lord was disseminated by others, ver. 18.

SECTION XVI.

Woman Washes Christ's Feet.—Luke vii.

36—50.

NARRATIVE.

AFTER the Widow of Nain's son was restored to life, John the Baptist being still in confinement, sent mes-

PT. 16. *Woman Washes Christ's Feet.* 79

ers to Christ, (Matth. xi. 2—20. Luke viii. 18—35.)
 is afterwards dined in the house of Simon the Phari-
 where a woman, after washing his feet with her
 s, and wiping them with the hairs of her head,
 nted them with ointment, which she had brought
 the purpose in a box of alabaster. The Pharisee
 offence at this; till Christ explained to him, that
 ough the woman had been a great sinner, yet having
 nted, and received forgiveness, her love for such
 lness and mercy, was greater, and more distinguish-
 than the love of others, who prided themselves in
 r sanctity and moral habits.

EXERCISE.

er. 36. Who invited our Lord? What did he desire
 to do? Where did our Lord go? What did he do
 e?—37. Who knew that Christ was there? What
 this woman been? What did she bring?—38. Where
 she stand? What was she doing? What did she be-
 to do? With what did she wash his feet? With what
 she wipe them? What did she kiss? With what did
 anoint them?—39. Who saw this? What did he
 Who did he suspect was not a prophet? What did
 hink he would have known, if he had been a pro-
 t? What did he say the woman was?—40. Who
 ce to Simon? What did he say? What did Si-
 bid him do?—41. How many debtors did our
 d say the creditor had? How much did the first owe
 ? How much did the second owe?—42. What did
 creditor do to them? Why did he forgive them?
 at question did our Lord ask at the Pharisee?—
 Who did Simon suppose would love him most? Who
 rightly judged?—44. Who turned to the woman?
 at did he ask Simon to observe? What had Simon
 given him? With what had the woman washed his
 :? With what did she wipe them?—45. Who had
 m him no kiss? What had the woman done?—
 What had Simon not done to our Lord's head?
 at had the woman done to his feet?—47. What did
 Lord say were many? What was done as to her sins?

80 *Woman Washes Christ's Feet.* SECT. 16.

Why were her sins forgiven? Who loveth little?—48. What did Christ say to the woman?—49. Who began to speak within themselves? What did they wonder at Christ's doing?—50. What did our Lord say had saved the woman? What did he bid her do?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 37. *A woman, which was a sinner*, A woman of a bad character.—*Alabaster box*, A box made of alabaster, a kind of soft white marble.

39. *Spake within himself*, Reasoned in his own mind.

41. *Creditor*, A person to whom something is due.—*Debtor*, A person who is due something to another.

42. *Frankly forgave them*, Generously and candidly made them a present of the debt.

43. *Rightly judged*, Come to a just conclusion.

50. *Thy faith hath saved thee*, Thy belief in me as the Messiah, and of my power and willingness to forgive thy sin, hath saved thy soul.

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn,

That a desire to do good unto all should prevent us from indulging a morose disposition, or refusing to accept and improve opportunities of usefulness when they occur, ver. 36.

That hospitality to the disciples of Christ, is the duty of those who profess to be his followers, ver. 36.

That the more helpless and wretched a sinner is in his own estimation, the more anxious will he be to know where Christ is to be found, that he may apply for relief, ver. 37.

That conviction of sin, and a sense of pardon, will always produce humility and gratitude in the renewed soul, ver. 38.

That the broken hearted alone can fully appreciate the love of Christ, and the value of salvation, ver. 38.

That the earnestness and bitterness of true repentance and devotion, are often matter of surprise and ridicule to the cold hearted formalist, ver. 39.

That contempt for the people of God, leads the proud

16. *Woman Washes Christ's Feet.* 81

to think meanly of God himself, though they be ashamed to make their sentiments known, 9.

we ought patiently to bear the hard and unjust hits of our brethren, and meekly endeavour to remove their prejudices, ver. 40.

it is our duty respectfully to submit ourselves to instruction of our teachers, when they attempt to remove our doubts, or correct our errors, ver. 40.

there are degrees of guilt in the characters of men. the precious privileges are neglected, five hundred will be due; while those who have not enjoyed may owe but fifty, ver. 41.

though there may be amongst men a variety in amount of debt due to God, there is yet a perfect equality in their inability to discharge any part of it.

"I have nothing to pay," ver. 42.

our love will be increased in proportion to our former danger and present security, we ought to make both the subject of frequent meditation, ver.

the zeal and affection of young converts should preserve the graces and activity of established Christians, ver. 44.

service to God is not so conspicuous in pompous display of devotion and zeal, as in those private acts of true affection, which seeks more to approve to God, than to meet the eye of man, ver. 45—48.

it is the inward graces, and not the outward circumstances to which God has respect.—"I love them who love me, and they that seek me early shall find me," ver. 47.

the burden of sin is the gift of God, and bestowed on those who diligently seek it by Jesus Christ, ver. 48.

the side of heart, and a self-righteous spirit are altogether opposed to the freeness of the gospel to the chief sinners, ver. 49.

faith in Christ is the only channel by which the promises of the gospel are conveyed to the sinner, 50.

the tears of genuine repentance and humility will

always issue in peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost, ver. 50.

SECTION XVI.

The Pool of Bethesda.—John v. 1—9

NARRATIVE.

ABOUT the time that Jesus dined with Simon the Pharisee, he went up to Jerusalem to one of the feasts of the Jews, at which time he came to the pool Bethesda. This pool was at certain seasons miraculously troubled by an angel; after which, whoever first could bathe in it, was cured of his disease, whatever it was. Here our Lord found a man who had been troubled with a certain infirmity for thirty-eight years, and who had been long waiting at this pool for a cure, but without success. Jesus took compassion on him, and restored him to health; and in evidence of its being a perfect cure, desired him to take up and remove the bed where he lay. This, being done on the Sabbath day, gave offence to some of the Jews, who enquired of the man who had given him such an order. This he could not tell them at the time; but being sometime afterwards at the temple, Jesus made himself known to him, and desired him to sin no more, lest a worse thing should happen to him. The Jews persecuted Jesus for doing this on the Sabbath-day; who, on that account, delivered them the discourse recorded in John v. 19—47.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 1. Who went up to Jerusalem? Why did he go up to Jerusalem?—2. What is said to have been done at Jerusalem? What was the name of this pool? What part of Jerusalem was this pool? What had the man done at the pool?—3. Who lay in these porches? What ailed them? Why did they lie there?—4. Who troubled the water? When did he trouble the water? Who was made whole after the troubling of the water?—5. Who is mentioned

SECT. 17. *The Pool of Bethesda.* 83

as lying there? What was his disease? How long had he been ill?—6. Who saw him lie in the porch? What did Jesus know? What did Jesus ask him?—7. Who answered Jesus? What did he call Jesus? Where did he desire to be put? When did he wish to go into the pool? *What prevented him from getting into the pool?* What does he say the other diseased people did? When did they step into the pool?—8. Who bid him rise? What did Jesus bid him take up? What was he then to do?—9. What did then take place? *What did the man do?* When did this happen?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 2. *A Pool*, A small body of standing water, or pond, used for bathing.—*Porches*, Piazzas, or covered walks. Open spaces, covered with a roof, and supported on pillars.—*Bethesda* means “a house of mercy.”

3. *Impotent folk*, Persons weak and disabled by disease.—*Halt*, Cripple.—*Withered*, Stiffened limbs, shrunk and dried up by disease.

5. *Infirmity*, Weakness, or disease.

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn,

That attendance on the means of grace and the public ordinances of the gospel, is the duty of all who are the followers of the Lord Jesus, ver. 1.

That God has appointed a spiritual Bethesda in Jesus Christ, by whom whosoever will, may be made whole, ver. 2.

That all who feel the loathsomeness and misery of spiritual disease, will continue to attend diligently and patiently on the means appointed for their cure, ver. 3.

That the power of Christ is superior to every want, and every disease of the soul. The weak and the ignorant, the morally halt, and the spiritually dead, are all within the reach of his grace and mercy, ver. 3.

That though salvation is altogether of God, yet he requires us to seek it from him in the use of means.

They must wait at the pool, or there is no hope of cure, ver. 4.

That the influences of the Spirit of God are necessary to render the means of grace effectual. The waters must be *troubled*, before the cure can be effected, ver. 4.

That uncertainty of the particular time when the means of grace shall be blessed for our salvation, should make us scrupulously constant and diligent in our attendance upon them, ver. 4.

That the delays of God in not rendering the means of salvation instantly and evidently effectual, are wisely designed to exercise our graces; for confirming our patience, deepening our humility, and making our cure more welcome and more conspicuous when it is at last effected, ver. 5.

That every call of the gospel, and every mean of grace, is an expostulation from God, and another enquiry to us, whether "we will be made whole," ver. 6.

That the want of will to be cured, is the true cause why the wicked continue in their sins.—"*Ye will not come unto me, that ye may have life,*" ver. 6.

That a consciousness of our inability to help ourselves, should bring us to Christ as our only hope of a cure, ver. 7.

That the want of Christian friends, and religious fellowship, is a great evil in the Christian life. "I have no man to help me," is often the cause of continued and increasing spiritual decay, ver. 7.

That the concerns of the soul and eternity, will admit of no idle ceremony or fashionable deference to others in religious exercises. Whoever is coming, let us, as in the presence of God, improve the means of our cure while we have the opportunity, ver. 7.

That though God may, for wise reasons, long delay meeting the soul in the use of means, yet by a patient continuance in well-doing they shall at last succeed.—If they *follow on* to know the Lord, *they shall know him,*" ver. 8.

That though Christ commonly saves by means, yet he can cure the soul without them.—Not those who are

deprived of the means of grace, look directly to him who can at once say, "Rise up and walk," ver. 8. That obedience to Christ, is at once the effect and the evidence of saving faith and spiritual health, ver. 9. That as the Sabbath is peculiarly appointed for the removal of spiritual disease, we ought to rejoice in its approach, and improve its opportunities, ver. 9.

SECTION XVIII.

Parable of the Sower.—Luke viii. 4—15.

See also Matth. xiii. 1—23, and Mark iv. 1—25.

NARRATIVE.

JESUS and his disciples, soon after the circumstance which took place at the pool of Bethesda, passing through the corn fields on the Sabbath-day, and being hungry, plucked the ears of corn, by which they gave offence to some of the Pharisees, (Mat. xii. 1—8. Mark ii. 23—28. Luke vi. 1—5.) A few days afterwards, he cured the man with a withered hand; and because of the opposition and persecution of the Jews on that account, he withdrew himself from them, (Matth. xii. 9—21. Mark iii. 1—12. Luke vi. 6—11.) After having his miracles again ascribed to Beelzebub, which he refuted, he was visited by his mother and brethren, who were become exceedingly anxious for his welfare, but they could not come in for the crowd, (Matth. xii. 22—50. Mark iii. 22—35.) Jesus then came out of the house, which could not contain the multitude, and went to the seaside, where he delivered the parable of the Sower, and afterwards interpreted it.

EXERCISES.

Ver. 4. Who were gathered together? From whence did they come? To whom did they come? How did Jesus speak to them?—5. Who went out to sow? What

did he sow? Where did the first portion of seed fall? What became of it? By what was it devoured?—6. Where did the second portion of seed fall? What became of it? When did it wither? What made it wither?—7. Where did the third portion of seed fall? What sprang up? With what did the thorns spring up? What was choaked? By what was the seed choked?—8. Where did the fourth portion of seed fall? What became of it? How much fruit did it produce? Who cried? When did he cry? Who were to hear?—9. Who asked for an explanation? Of what did they ask an explanation?—10. What mysteries were given them to know? How were others instructed? Why were they so instructed?—11. Who explained the parable? What is meant by the seed in the parable?—12. What is meant by the way-side? Who cometh? What does he take away? From whence does he take it away? Why does he take the word from their hearts? What would happen were they to believe?—13. What is said of the rock, or stony-ground hearers? When do they receive the word? How do they receive the word? What is that which they have not? What do they do for a while? When do they fall away?—14. When is it said the thorny-ground hearers go forth? What becomes of them when they go forth? With what are they choaked? What do they not bring to perfection?—15. What kind of heart have the good-ground hearers? What do they do when they hear the word? How do they bring forth fruit?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 4. *Parable*, A continued comparison of one thing to another. A picture of spiritual things, by means of sensible and external objects.

5. *A Sower*, A person who scatters seed in a field, or garden, for the purpose of its growing up and producing fruit. *Way-side*, Side of the road. *Trodden*, Trampled upon with the feet. *Fowls*, Birds.

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6. *Lacked moisture*, Wanted water ; was dry at the root.
7. *Choked it*, Kept it from the sun and air, so that it could not thrive, or bring fruit to perfection.
8. *Hundred-fold*, A hundred times as much as the quantity at first sown.
10. *Mysteries*, Things not easily understood.
13. *Time of temptation*, Times of trial, persecution, or incitements to sin and apostacy.
14. *Perfection*, To a complete state.
15. *Patience*, With calm submission and constancy.

EXPLANATION OF THE SYMBOLS.

Seed, The word of God, or the truths of the gospel, which ought to be kept pure, and liberally sown in every part of the *field* of this world.

Sowers, Ministers, teachers, parents, and all who communicate the truths of the gospel to others. The *hearers* are represented as ground of different kinds, receiving this seed according to the state of their hearts, and circumstances in life.

Way-side hearers, (1.) Those who, by inattention, wandering thoughts, or drowsiness, are prevented from hearing or understanding the word when it is delivered or read. (2.) Those who are so allured by the deceitfulness of sin, that they will not allow the truths of the gospel to have any impression on their hearts. (3.) Those whose violent prejudices, wicked lives, and unruly lusts and passions, induce them to contemn and trample upon the truths of the gospel.

Stony-ground Hearers, Those whose imaginations are easily excited, and who are induced, without due consideration, to receive the word with joy, and for a while to make a promising profession; but not having their religion placed on a proper foundation, give it up whenever they are called to suffer persecution, or when any sufficiently powerful temptation occurs.

Thorny-ground Hearers, They who make, and continue to maintain an outward profession of religion; but who permit themselves to be so absorbed by the business and pleasures of life, that religion is neglected, be-

comes a mere name, and brings forth no fruit to perfection.

Good-ground Hearers. Those who, having their affections set more on the things of God, than the things of the world, having their hearts renewed by the operation of the Spirit of God, receive and nourish the seed of the word; which brings forth fruit in their lives, to the praise and glory of God.

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn,

- That we should embrace every opportunity of having our knowledge increased, and the things of God made plain to our understanding, ver. 9.
- That the *desire* for wisdom is the way to get wisdom. They who apply to Christ for knowledge shall not be disappointed; while others who are careless, shall hear without understanding, ver. 10.
- That a mere attendance on the preaching of the word, or the means of grace, is no sure sign of true religion, ver. 12.
- That wandering thoughts and inattention in hearing the word, are invitations to Satan to render it useless, ver. 12.
- That there may be many fair appearances and even zealous affections in the profession of religion, without true and saving faith, ver. 13.
- That they who trust in their own strength, lean on a broken reed. Temptation or persecution will dissipate all those resolutions which have not their foundation on the grace of Christ, and a sense of human weakness, ver. 13.
- That indulgence in worldly pleasures is dangerous to true religion. Sensual gratification destroys the religion for holiness and heaven, and prevents the growth of humility and self-restraint. ver. 14.
- That a medium station in society is that most favourable to the prosperity of true godliness. Affluence and want,—riches and care,—each in its own way checks the word, and render it unfruitful, ver. 14.

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That legal observances, and rapturous emotions, though beautiful in the sight of men, will not be accepted of God, unless they bring their fruit to perfection, ver. 14. That they who would receive the word effectually, and bring forth fruit, must have their hearts prepared, and made good and honest by the Spirit of God, ver. 15. That an essential ingredient in true faith, is a patient continuance in well going. They must not only ripen into fruit, but they must continue to bring forth fruit with patience, ver. 15.

SECTION XIX.

Parable of the Tares.—Matth. xiii. 24—30.

NARRATIVE.

OUR Lord continuing to teach the multitudes at the sea-side, after delivering the parable of the Sower, as in last section, uttered also, among others, the parable of the tares of the field, which he some time afterwards explained to them, Matth. xiii. 36—44.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 24. What did our Lord put forth? What was this parable intended to illustrate? To what does he compare the kingdom of heaven? What did the man sow? Where did he sow the good seed?—25. Who came afterwards? When did the enemy come? *What did he sow?* Where did he sow the tares? What did he do when he had sown the tares?—26. What sprang up? What did it bring forth? What appeared when it had thus sprung up?—27. Who observed this? To whom did the servants go? What did they say he had sown? At what were they surprised?—28. Who did he say had done this? What did the servants desire to do? What did they wish to root up?—29. Did they get permission? Why were they not allowed to root up the tares?—30. *What were the servants ordered to do?*

Till when were they to grow together? Who were then to gather them? What was to be done to the tares when they were gathered? What was to be done with the wheat?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 24. *'Kingdom of Heaven*, This phrase in the New Testament means sometimes, 1. The gospel dispensation in general, and its declaration to men; 2. The establishment of Christ's kingdom in the soul at conversion; and, 3. The Kingdom of glory in heaven. The first is the sense in which it is understood in this parable.

25. *Tares*, Weeds which are sometimes found among corn.

27. *Householder*, Master of the house.

29. *Root up*, Pull up by the roots.

30. *Reapers*, Those who cut down the corn.—*Bundles*, Quantities put up together.—*Barn*, House for preserving grain.

EXPLANATION OF SYMBOLS.

See from ver. 37 to 43.

Ver. 24. *The Sower*, Jesus Christ, the head of the church, and the Lord of his people.

The good seed, True Christians, converted from the world, and placed in the church by the grace and power of Jesus Christ.

The field, The world, or the church of Christ in the world.

25. *While men slept*, While the servants of Christ were off their guard, and not so watchful as they ought to be against the intrusion of bad men and the promulgation of false doctrines.

The enemy, Satan, the enemy of God and man.

Sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way, Excited men to adopt and spread false doctrines in the church, which he did secretly and without noise, knowing that these errors would at last produce an unchristian spirit, and immoral conduct in those who adopted them.

Servants of the householder, The servants and ministers of Christ.

28. *Gather them up,* Separate them from true believers ; cast them out of the church ; or destroy them from the world.

30. *The harvest,* The last day, when a final separation shall take place betwixt the righteous and the wicked.

The reapers, The angels of God, who alone are to be employed, under the direction of God, for separating betwixt the righteous and the wicked.

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn,

That the children of God, being compared to seed, are intended to spring up, and grow, and bring forth fruit. They who perceive no fruit in their lives, have reason to fear that they are not of the good seed planted by God, ver. 24.

That true godliness is altogether the work of God. Those members of his Church who have not been planted by his grace, and renewed by his Spirit, will at last be found to be bad seed, sown by the enemy of Christ, ver. 24.

That Satan is a watchful enemy. When the servants of Christ sleep on their post, they will find, though perhaps not at the time, that Satan has all the time been awake and active, ver. 25.

That as the introduction of false doctrines, and ungodly professors into the Church, is the natural effect of negligence on the part of God's people ; they ought, when they appear, immediately to investigate their cause, ver. 25.

That a mere profession of religion, and having a place among the people of God, are no sure signs of true godliness. It is only by "their fruits," that the true Christian is to be known, ver. 26.

That though the ungodly may impute the bad lives and unchristian spirit of hypocrites in the Church, to the good seed which was sown by God ; yet his children

know that they arise from tares sown by an enemy to both God and his people.

That the effects of our sins, though long in producing their fruit, will at last appear to our surprise and shame. "Our sin will find us out," ver. 27.

That they who connive at the introduction of false doctrines, or of worldly and wicked men into the church, are the enemies of Christ, and will be responsible for all the evils which may arise by their so doing, ver. 28.

That when by a sinful *deficiency* of zeal, we have permitted the introduction of evil, we must not, by a sinful *excess* of zeal, rashly attempt its removal, ver. 28.

That as the deficiency of some Christians, and the plausibility of false professors, render rash or severe measures dangerous; we ought to be charitable in our judgments, and cautious, and lenient in our decisions and discipline, ver. 29.

That self-examination is an important duty in all who profess to be the children of God. Tares and wheat, though now growing in the same field, and confounded by the superficial observer, will not occupy the same barn. God will shew the difference when reformation is too late; and will consign the self-deceivers to that place where there is no hope, ver. 30.

That the wicked who have on earth joined hand in hand in troubling the Church, and propagating their lies, will be joint partakers of the same punishment hereafter. They will be "bound together in bundles for burning," ver. 30.

That though the holy souls of the righteous may, in this world, be grieved with the machinations of designing men, and the wickedness of false professors, yet this will not continue always. The angels of God will at last make a final separation betwixt them, and will take his own people to that place where nothing defileth, and where no unclean thing can enter, ver. 30.

SECTION XX.

John the Baptist put to Death.—Matth. xiv. 1—12.

See also Mark vi. 14. and Luke ix. 7.

NARRATIVE.

AFTER the parable of the tares, our Lord delivered those of the seed which sprang up imperceptibly, (Mark vi. 26—29.) the grain of mustard seed, (Matth. xiii. 31, 32. Mark vi. 30—32.) and the leaven, (Matth. xiii. 33.) when his mother and brethren again came to him, (Luke viii. 19.) After our Lord had explained the parable of the tares, (Matth. xiii. 36—43.) he delivered the parables of the treasure hid in the field,—the merchant seeking goodly pearls,—the net cast into the sea, &c. (Matth. xiii. 44—52.) and soon after went with his disciples to Nazareth, (Matth. xiii. 53—58. Mark vi. 1—6.) He then sent them out two and two, and gave them power to work miracles,—a thing which had never been heard of in the world before, (Luke ix. 1—6. Mark vi. 7—13.)

The fame of Jesus on account of all this, reached the court of Herod; who had a little before this put John the Baptist to death; and he now thought that Jesus must be John the Baptist risen again from the dead. This suggestion of his troubled conscience, gave him much uneasiness. But his courtiers endeavoured to persuade him that it was not John, but another of the prophets, (Matth. xiv. 1, 2. Mark vi. 14—16. Luke ix. 7—9.)

EXERCISE.

Ver. 1. Who heard of the fame of Jesus?—2. To whom did he speak? Who did he think Christ was? From what did he think he had risen? What shewed themselves in him?—3. Whom had Herod laid hold of? *What did he do to him?* Where did he put him? For whose sake did Herod do this? Who was Herodias?

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4. Who had spoken to him about Herodias? What was not lawful for Herod?—5. What did Herod wish to do? What prevented him from doing this? Why did he fear the people? Who counted John as a prophet?—6. Who pleased Herod? What did she do to please Herod? When did she dance before them?—7. What did Herod promise her? In what manner did he promise her this?—8. *What did she ask?* In what did she ask it? Who instructed her to ask John's head?—9. Who was sorry? At what was he sorry? What did he command to be given her? Why did he do this?—10. Who sent? Where did he send? What did he send to do?—11. What was brought? In what was it brought? To whom was it given? To whom did she carry it?—12. Who took up the body? *What did they do with it?* What did they do after burying it?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 1. *Tetrarch*, A Roman governor. One who governed the fourth part of a country, or province.—*Fame*, The report of his mighty works.

3. *Bound him*, Secured him with chains or cords.

4. *Not lawful*, Sinful, and contrary to the law of God—*To have her*, To live with her as his wife.

5. *Multitude*, The great body of the Jewish people,—*Counted him as a prophet*, Believed him to be a messenger from God.

6. *Birth day was kept*, A great feast was made in honour of Herod's birth day.

8. *Charger*, A large dish.

10. *Beheaded*, Took off his head.

11. *Damsel*, The young woman, the daughter of Herodias.

12. *Disciples*, Scholars, or followers.

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn,
That a troubled conscience will sometimes induce men to make enquiries about Christ, when they have no de-

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sign to believe in him, or to repent of, or forsake their sins, ver. 1.

That the slumbering consciences of the wicked, whatever their station or their depravity, will at last be awakened, and their sins will, sooner or later, find them out.

—Herod the king, the tyrant, the adulterer, and the murderer, had deceived himself, and laid his conscience asleep, by pleading his company and his oath ; but it is now awakened ; and he finds, when it is too late, that his reasons were groundless, and his guilt without excuse, ver. 2.

That sinful indulgences, and ungodly companions, are great bars to the success of the gospel. Herod heard John, and did many things ; but now, for Herodias' sake, he silences his admonitions, and casts him into prison, ver. 3.

That we ought to be faithful, as well as prudent, in the performance of duty, whatever shall be the consequence. John, when called in duty to do so, preached to the king, though it afterwards cost him his life, ver. 4.

That though the fear of men sometimes bringeth a snare, yet God frequently makes it the means of restraining his enemies, ver. 5.

That ungodly men may acknowledge the authority of God's people and word, and yet refuse to do those things which they command them, ver. 5.

That seasons of feasting are seasons of danger. Ungodly revels are too frequently the preludes to injustice and cruelty, ver. 6.

That when parents are better pleased with the outward accomplishments of their children, than with their inward piety and grace, there is reason to fear that they will become a curse to their parents, rather than a blessing, ver. 6.

That rash promises for trifling or vain services, are unreasonable in themselves, and frequently unjust to others, ver. 7.

That they who blindly yield their judgments to the allurements of sin, will soon begin to persecute their best

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friends, and lavish rewards on their greatest enemies, ver. 7.

That ungodly parents are a great curse to their children. Their very instructions sometimes tend to the ruin of their souls, ver. 8.

That children ought to shew their gratitude to God for pious parents and instructors, by following their example, and taking their advice, ver. 8.

That sin, if indulged in the heart, will at last break out in the life. Herod secretly sought the death of John, and his birth-day ripens his malice into murder, ver. 9.

That they who are previously resolved on acts of sin, will often be allowed to deceive themselves, by forming groundless excuses for its commission, ver. 9.

That pretended sorrow for sin which we are determined to commit, is gross hypocrisy, and an open insult to the authority of God, ver. 9.

That wicked companions are a great hindrance to right acting. Herod's resolution of murder is formed, not only because of his *oath*, but also, and principally, for "the sake of them who sat at meet with him," ver. 9.

That it is better to infringe sinful oaths, and incur the displeasure of sinful men, than to insult God by acting contrary to our conscience, ver. 9.

That God's dealings with his people, though always wise, are often mysterious. The life of the most honoured of God's servant's is here sacrificed to the hatred and caprice of the most worthless of sinners, ver. 10.

That a spirit of persecution and malice tends to change the dispositions of men to the ferocity of the beast.

The delicate damsel, who danced to the king, can look with savage joy on the bloody head of the aged saint; —she receives it with her own hands, and carries it to her mother, ver. 11.

That the calumnies or the persecutions of the world should not prevent us from acknowledging the worth of, and shewing our respect to, the people of God. John's disciples shewed their respect to their master by burying the headless trunk; though found in a prison, ver. 12.

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That as Christ is the channel from which we derive all our comforts, we ought therefore to carry to him all our sorrows and complaints. Parents, and friends, and teachers may be removed from us, but, "he is a Friend which sticketh closer than a brother," ver 12.

SECTION XXI

Five Thousand Fed.—Mark vi. 34—44.

See also Matt. xiv. 15. Luke ix. 12.

NARRATIVE.

AFTER the death of John the Baptist, the disciples having returned to our Lord at Capernaum, sailed with him over the lake of Gennesareth to the desert of Bethsaida, whither the multitude followed them. Here the disciples and the multitude continued with him for several days, hearing his instructions, till the provisions were spent which they had brought with them. On the evening of this last day, he caused them all to sit down on the ground; and by his power and blessing, made five barley loaves and two small fishes satisfy the hunger of five thousand men, besides women and children. When they had all eaten and were filled, there were gathered twelve baskets full of broken bread; a quantity probably much greater than there was at first.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 34. Who came out? What did he see? With what was he moved? Why was he moved with compassion? What did he begin to do?—35. Who came to Jesus? When did they come to him? What did they say of the place? *What did they say of the time?*—36. Who were to be sent away? Where were they to go? What were they to do in the country and villages? Why was it necessary to buy bread?—37. Who answered the disciples? What were they to do? How much bread did they suppose would be necessary?—38. What

did Jesus ask them ? What did he bid them do ? How many loaves did they say they had ? How many fishes had they ?—39. Whom did Jesus command ? What did he command them to do ? *Where were the people to sit down ?* How many were to sit down ? By what were they to sit down ?—40. In what order did the people sit down ? What was the number in the ranks.—41. What did Jesus take ? Where did he look ? What did he do ? What did he break ? To whom did he give them ? For what purpose did he give them to the disciples ? What was done with the two fishes ? Among whom were they divided ?—42. Who ate of the loaves and fishes ? What is it said they were ?—43. With what did they fill the baskets ? Of what were these the fragments ? *How many baskets full of fragments were there left ?*—44. How many were there fed ?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 34. *Moved with compassion*, Had pity upon them ; was sorry at their destitute condition.

35. *Far spent*, Almost gone, and night approaching.
—*Desert place*, A place where there are no inhabitants.

36. *Villages*, Little towns, or places where there were several houses together.

37. *Two-hundred penny worth of bread*, Bread to the value of two hundred pence. A Roman penny being about seven pence half-penny, this would be about the value of £6: 5s.

39. *By companies*, In distinct and separate divisions, or classes.

40. *In ranks*, Not in confusion, but in regular lines, of fifty or a hundred persons in each, having spaces left betwixt the lines, for the disciples to walk, and to serve each person in the ranks.

41. *Blessed*, Asked a blessing.

43. *Fragments*, Broken pieces of bread and fish, which remained after all had eaten to their satisfaction.

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn,

That the people of God ought to take a deeper interest in the spiritual, than in the temporal wants of their fellow men, ver. 34.

That compassion for sinners cannot be better evidenced than by affording them the means of religious instruction, ver. 34.

That a due and moderate concern for the supply of temporal wants is not incompatible with the deeper interest we ought to take in the concerns of the soul, ver. 35.

That piety and charity should always go hand in hand. When the spiritual wants are supplied, temporal necessities should not be forgotten, ver. 35.

That as Christians can, of themselves, do nothing effectually for the benefit of their fellow men, they ought to lay their neighbour's case, along with their own, before the Lord, for his consideration and help, ver. 35.

That fears, or a feeling of temporal want, are often serious bars in the way of communion with God, and of spiritual improvement. They "Send them away," ver. 36.

That worldly cares should, as much as possible, be kept separate from, and not be allowed to interfere with, our public or private religious duties, ver. 36.

That temporal wants must, in ordinary cases, be supplied by personal exertions. The people must "*buy themselves bread*," ver. 36.

That the care of God for his people includes their temporal, as well as their spiritual concerns. "He who spared not his own Son, shall he not *with him* freely give us *all things*," ver. 37.

That temporal mercies are doubly valuable, when they tend to promote our eternal interests, and our spiritual improvement, ver. 37.

That a fear of future difficulties must never prevent the performance of plain present duties, ver. 37.

That enquiry into the circumstances of those who require our help, ought to be a constant prelude to our granting them relief, ver. 38.

That a due attention to domestic economy will make God's people more comfortable at home, and enable them to be more useful to their needy brethren abroad, ver. 38.

That the value of a benefit is often enhanced by the manner in which it is conferred. Our Lord not only fed the multitude, but he did so with a due regard to their *individual convenience*. They were divided into companies, disposed in ranks, and sat down on the green grass, ver. 39.

That the great concern of God's people in every circumstance of life should be, to cultivate a child-like obedience in the performance of present duty, leaving the result to God. The people saw no prospect of having their wants supplied; yet they obeyed the command, arranged themselves in companies, and were rewarded for their faith by being fed in a way of which they previously could have had no conception, ver. 40.

That as all our mercies come from God, we ought to give him all the glory, and ask his blessing on the use of our comforts, ver. 41.

That they who supply our wants are the servants of God, appointed for this special purpose. Parents, masters, and benefactors receive from God all the good things which they bestow on their dependents. While, therefore, we are grateful to them for the blessings they grant, let us not forget him who inclined their hearts, and gave them the power to confer them upon us, ver. 41.

That they who feed on what Christ has purchased and God has blessed, will have no cause to complain of want. They shall all "*be filled*," ver. 42.

That God's help is not always in proportion to apparent means. A cruise of oil, and a handful of meal in the barrel, five loaves and two fishes, are more than sufficient for an Almighty God, when he designs to as-

sist ; and more may be left than was originally used, ver. 43.

That there is no exhausting of the precious blessings which are treasured up in Christ. Giving does not impoverish him, nor does withholding enrich him. When all are served and filled, there is still an infinity of blessing and mercy behind, ver. 43.

That in the application of perishing sinners to the Lord Jesus for blessing and help, no extent of number can contract his liberality, or exhaust his means. All are invited, and there is enough for all. ver 44.

SECTION XXII.

Jesus and Peter Walk on the Sea.—Mat. xiv. 22-33.

See also Mark vi. 45 ; and John vi. 17.

NARRATIVE.

THE effect produced on the multitude by the miracle of the loaves and fishes was so great, that they determined to take Jesus by force and make him a king.—Perceiving their intention, he first constrained his disciples to go into a boat and sail away for the other side, and then persuaded the multitudes to depart, while he himself went up to a mountain alone. The disciples in the boat had to encounter a contrary wind ; which, notwithstanding all their efforts in rowing, prevented them from getting to the opposite side of the lake.—About three o'clock in the morning, while they were yet in the midst of their voyage, our Lord came to them walking on the sea.—They were at first terrified, supposing they had seen a spirit ; but when he made himself known, Peter requested permission to come out of the boat to him, and walk on the sea also ; which was granted. Peter accordingly walked on the sea ; till be-

ginning to be afraid, his faith failed him, and he began to sink, when Jesus laid hold of him, and both came into the boat. By another miracle, Jesus caused the boat instantly to reach the desired port.

EXERCISES.

Ver. 22. Who went into the ship? Who constrained them to go? Whom were they to go before? Whither were they to go? What was Jesus to do while they were sailing to the other side?—23. Where did Jesus go? When did he go up to the mountain? For what did he go up to the mountain? When is it said he was aloft?—24. Where was the ship? Who were in this ship? What is said of the ship in the midst of the sea? Why was it tossed?—25. Who went to them? When did Jesus go to them? *In what manner did he go to them?*—26. Who were troubled? At what were they troubled? What did they think he was? What did they do?—27. Who spoke to them? What did he bid them be? Who did he say it was? Who were not to be afraid?—28. Who answered Jesus? Where was Peter? What did Peter call Jesus? *What did he desire Jesus to bid him do?* On what was he to go to Jesus?—29. What did Jesus bid him do? From what did Peter come down? On what did he walk? To whom did he walk?—30. *What is said of the wind while Peter was walking on the sea?* What effect had this storm on Peter? What was the consequence of his fear? To whom did he cry? What did he cry?—31. What did Jesus do? Of whom did he lay hold? What did Jesus call him? What did he ask him?—32. Where did Jesus and Peter go? What happened when they went into the ship?—33. What did the people in the ship do? What did they say he was?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 22. *Constrained*, Prevailed on them, or forced them contrary to their own wish.

23. *Apart*, By himself, without the presence of any other person.

24. *Tossed*, In violent motion, because of the rough sea and the wind.—*Wind was contrary*, Blowing in the opposite direction to their course.

25. *Fourth watch of the night*, About three or four o'clock in the morning. The *First watch*, was from sun-set till Nine o'clock; the *Second watch*, from Nine till Twelve; the *Third watch*, (sometimes called "cock-crowing,") from Twelve at midnight, till Three o'clock in the morning; and the *Fourth watch*, from Three o'clock till sun-rise.

27. *Straightway*, Immediately, without delay.—*Be of good cheer*, Be satisfied and happy that I am come to your relief.

30. *Boisterous*, Blowing very strong.

31. *Caught him*, Laid hold of him.—*Wherefore didst thou doubt?* Why begin to be afraid, by suspecting my power and goodness.

32. *Wind ceased*, Became calm.

33. *Worshipped him*, Paid him divine honours;—acknowledged his divinity.

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn,

That absence from Christ in his ordinances ought always to be matter of constraint, and not of choice, ver. 22.

That when the Lord's people are deprived, for a time, of his sensible presence, and the comfort of his fellowship, if it is by his command, they may expect his blessing and his presence at the proper time, ver. 22.

That secret prayer ought not only to be attended to but prepared for.—He sent the multitude away, that he might not be interrupted in his devotional retirement, ver. 23.

That though trials and afflictions may be the consequence of the obedience of the Christian, he is not on that account, to question the wisdom or the goodness of his heavenly Father.—God "doeth all things well," and will make every thing work together for their good, ver. 24.

That when afflictions come in the performance of duty, we ought not to be impatient at their continuance; nor anxious about their result. We are then more immediately under the care and protection of our great Captain, who does not send us "to war on our own charges," ver. 24.

That though help to the people of God may be long delayed, yet help will come at the proper time, ver. 25.

That there is no obstruction so great, but Christ can overcome it, when the time comes to help his people. Chains will drop from the hands, prison gates will open, and the sea will become as dry land, when these things are necessary to accomplish his purposes, ver. 25.

That ignorance, and the weakness or want of faith, are great sources of uneasiness to the Christian. When we know our Lord, and have confidence in his power and goodness, we will rest on him in safety and "cast out fear," ver. 26.

That Christians are often alarmed at those things which should inspire confidence; and consider those things most detrimental to their peace and security, which are promoting their happiness and safety, ver. 26.

That the knowledge of Christ is the foundation of peace.—"It is I; be not afraid," ver. 27.

That we ought not to desire or attempt hazardous experiments, without an evident call in providence, or an urgent case of necessity or usefulness, ver. 28.

That requiring special signs from God, is altogether unwarrantable, and may be dangerous. If this had not been Christ, Peter's sign would have been his destruction, ver. 28.

That nothing is too difficult for the Christian, when acting under the authority of his Master. Peter leaves the ship in which his brethren trembled, and walks unassisted on the sea in which the boat was like to perish, ver. 29.

That Christ sometimes allows his people to take their own way, to convince them of their weakness, ignorance, and unbelief; and thus checks their spiritual pride, and deepens their humility, ver. 29.

That a single eye to Christ in all the dispensations or providence, is the only security for a living and active faith. When Peter's attention began to be occupied by the raging sea and the boisterous winds, he lost sight of Christ, his faith failed, and he began to sink, ver. 30.

That where there are great attainments in the divine life, God will always create a corresponding degree of humility. Peter's pride might have exceeded his faith, had not his sinking and his danger put him in mind that he was not yet perfect, ver. 30.

That in every case of difficulty or trial, we should betake ourselves directly to Christ.—When the Christian is emptied of self-confidence, he is sure to find help in his Lord, ver. 30.

That Christ answers the prayers of his people at the time he sees it to be best for them in present circumstances.—The woman of Canaan may cry loud, and follow long, before an answer is returned; but Peter is sinking, and instant help is given, ver. 31.

That pride cometh before a fall.—Peter's ostentatious display of his faith, is made the very means of exhibiting his weakness, his folly, and his want of faith, ver. 31.

That deliverance from trouble is often accompanied by rebukes for sin.—Peter is saved, but his sin is at the same time exposed, ver. 31.

That the afflictions of God's people will last no longer than their continuance is necessary.—Peter is rebuked, the power and goodness of Christ are displayed, and immediately the storm ceases, ver. 32.

That temporal afflictions are spiritual blessings.—Deliverance from this storm is made the means of producing grateful hearts and strong faith in those who encountered it, ver. 33.

That every deliverance should increase our gratitude, heighten our devotion, and strengthen our faith, ver. 33.

SECTION XXIII.

Canaanitish Woman.—Matth. xv. 21—28.*See also Mark vii. 24.*

NARRATIVE.

ON the same day on which our Lord and his disciples crossed the lake, (as in last Section,) he went to Capernaum, in the neighbourhood of which he performed several miracles.—(Mark vi. 54, 55. Matth. xiv. 35, 36.)—The people who wished to make him a king, not having returned home as he had desired them, and not finding him in the mountain in the morning, sailed to Capernaum, where they found him teaching in the Synagogue.—(John vi. 22—71.)—On his journey to Jerusalem, to the feast of the passover, he wrought many miracles.—(Mark vi. 56.)—And as he could not remain there with safety, he went from Jerusalem to Galilee,—(John vii. 1.)—where his disciples were blamed for eating with unwashed hands.—(Mark vii. 1—23. Matth. xv. 1—20.)—His freedom in reproving the Pharisees made them the more intent on his destruction, which obliged him to remove to a more remote region betwixt the cities of Tyre and Sidon.—(Matth. xv. 21. Mark vii. 24.)—In passing along one of the streets there, a heathen woman, whose daughter was possessed with a devil, besought him to cure her: which, after a severe trial of her faith, our Lord very graciously did.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 21. Who went thence? Whither did he depart?—22. Who met him? From whence did she come? To whom did she cry? What did she call him? On whom did she ask him to have mercy? Who was ill? What ailed her?—23. Who besought Jesus for her? What had Jesus done to make them inter-

cede for her? What did they beseech Jesus to do? Why did they wish her sent away?—24. Who answered them? To whom did Jesus say he was sent?—25. Who then came to Jesus? What did she do? What did she call him? What did she ask?—26. Who answered the woman? To what did he compare the blessings of the gospel? To whom was this bread not to be cast?—27. Who made answer to this? Of what did she say the dogs ate? From whence did the crumbs fall?—28. Who answered to this? What did he say was great? Whose faith was great? What was to be to whole?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 21. *Coasts*, The country of Tyre and Sidon near the sea; those places lying on the shores of the Mediterranean.

22. *Woman of Canaan*, A woman belonging to that country, a Gentile, perhaps formerly an idolater.—*Son of David*, A name given to the promised Messiah, who was to be of the seed of David.—*Grievously*, Very painfully.—*Vexed with a devil*, Possessed by a devil, who caused her much uneasiness and pain.

23. *Besought him*, Begged and intreated him.

24. *Lost sheep of the house of Israel*, The ungodly Jews, the descendants of Jacob, to whom Christ was specially promised as their Lord and Redeemer.

26. *Children's bread*, The blessings of the gospel, promised and offered first to the Jews.—*To dogs*, To those who are not children; to Gentiles, whom the Jews affected to despise as unclean and unholy.

27. *The crumbs*, The broken pieces of bread remaining after the children are served;—meaning the blessings of the gospel.

33. *Be it unto thee even as thou wilt*, Your wish is accomplished;—what you desire is done.—*Made whole*, Cured.

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn,

That there is no nation or people excluded from the blessings of the gospel.—The example of Christ calls us to send the knowledge of salvation to all
ver. 21.

That they whose outward circumstances are less favourable to spiritual improvement, will soon outstrip those in a more favourable condition,
That the presence of Christ by his word or ordinance ought to excite in us strong desires for deliverance,
help, ver. 22.

That when relatives or friends are so under the power and dominion of Satan, that they cannot, or will not apply to Christ for themselves, we ought to be more urgent on their behalf, ver. 22.

That spiritual favours conferred on our friends, are mercies bestowed on ourselves, ver. 22.

That God's delay in answering prayers, is no sign that they have been rejected.—It is our duty to pray and not to faint," ver. 23.

That there is more real friendship in the neglect of Christ, than in the officious interference of worldly friends.—There was love in Christ's love, and much selfishness in the disciples' help, ver. 23.

That good people are sometimes actuated by unworthy motives in the discharge of their duty, and even in the exercise of charity.—The disciples interceded for the Canaanitish woman, but it is because she troubled them, ver. 23.

That the requests of God's people are sometimes refused for the present, that they may become more fortunate for the blessings they seek, ver. 24.

That the application of others to God on our behalf should excite us more earnestly to apply for our own help,
ver. 25.

That God sometimes frowns where he most loves, that he may exercise his people's faith, and increase their humilitie, ver. 26.

That as there is bread provided for those who shall become the children of God by faith, but which shall at last be refused to all others, let us be diligent to make our calling and election sure, lest we at last be accounted as dogs, and thrust from his heavenly table, ver. 26.

That it is both our duty and our wisdom to plead guilty to every charge which the law of God brings against us.—“Truth Lord;” *we* are altogether vile, but our trust is alone in Christ, ver. 27.

That our wretchedness and misery are our best pleas at a throne of grace.—We *are* nothing, and *have* nothing, and *can do* nothing; to whom then can we go, but to him who has the words of eternal life, ver. 27.

That the temporal good things in which the enemies of God delight and place their happiness, are but crumbs which fall from a table supplied with richer dainties.—The children are fed with spiritual bread, the riches of the wicked are but offals and crumbs, ver. 27.

That they who persevere in prayer will at last be heard, and, if good for them, will get their desires fulfilled, ver. 28.

That as faith is at once the measure and the great channel of Christ's communications to his people, it should be our constant prayer that he would “increase our faith,” ver. 28.

That the blessings bestowed upon parents often extend to their children.—The daughter is here cured, as the reward of the mother's faith, ver. 28.

SECTION XXIV.

Transfiguration of Christ.—Luke ix. 28—36.

See also Matt. xvii. 1. and Mark ix. 2.

NARRATIVE.

AFTER curing the daughter of the woman of Canaan, our Lord passed through Decapolis on his way to Ga-

lile —While on this journey, he cured a man who was deaf, (Mark vii. 21—37.) and when he arrived in Galilee, he cured many diseases, and fed four thousand people with seven loaves and a few small fishes, and then departed to Magdala, (Matt. xv. 29—39. Mark viii. 1—10.) At Magdala the Pharisees required a sign from him of his being the Messiah, when he promised them the sign of Jonah, and departed with the disciples, to the other side of the Lake, (Matth. xvi. 1—12. Mark viii. 11—21.)—When he landed at Bethsaida, he cured a blind man, (Mark viii. 22—26.) and then went north to Cesarea Philippi, where a conversation took place betwixt him and Peter, (Matth. xvi. 13—23. Mark viii. 27—33. Luke ix. 18—22.) and he inculcated the duty of self-denial, and declared that he was to be the judge at the last day, (Matth. xvi. 24—28. Mark viii. 34, 35, ix. 1. Luke ix. 23—27.)—About eight days after these circumstances, he took Peter, James, and John up into a high mountain, where, while engaged in prayer, he was transfigured before them, and had a conversation with Moses and Elias concerning his death at Jerusalem.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 28. Whither did Jesus go? Whom did he take with him? For what purpose did he go up to the mountain? When did this happen?—29. What was altered? *What was he doing when his countenance was altered?* What appearance did his clothes assume?—30. Who came to Jesus? Who were they? What is it said they did?—31. In what did they appear? *Of what did they speak?* Where was his decease to be accomplished?—32. In what state were Peter and they who were with him? Whose glory did they see? When did they see this? Whom else did they see besides Christ?—33. Who departed? From whom did they depart? Who spake to Jesus? What did he call him? Where did he say it was good for them to be? What did he wish made? For whom did he wish the tabernacles made? What is said of this speech?—34. What

What came? When did this cloud come? What did it do? Whom did it overshadow? What effect did this on them? Whom did they fear?—35. What came out of the cloud? Of whom did the voice speak? What did the voice say? What was Jesus? What did he desire the disciples to do?—36. When was Jesus alone? What did the disciples keep close? When did they tell no man? What did they tell no man?

EXPLANATIONS.

29. Fashion of his Countenance was altered, The appearance of his face was changed.—*Raiment, Clothes.*
Shining, Sparkling with a glorious light.
Appeared in Glory, Made a bright and glorious appearance, like the inhabitants of Heaven.—*Decease,*
 —*Accomplish at Jerusalem,* Should take place at Jerusalem.
Tavernacles, Temporary abodes, or places to dwell in.
Overshadowed them, Covered or surrounded them.
Kept it close, Kept it secret at the time; did not say what they had seen.

LESSONS.

In this Section we learn,

social, as well as secret prayer, is the duty of Christians. Jesus, and his favourite disciples, retire to the others, to engage in this delightful and profitable duty, ver. 28.

There may be those among our Christian brethren, whose friendship and fellowship we may prize more, and seek to enjoy oftener, without detriment to our tender love and affection to the others. Christ loved his disciples, though he, for wise purposes, eminently distinguished only a few, ver. 28.

The glimpses we have of Christ's glory upon earth, should lead us to contemplate his everlasting glory in heaven. If his glory was so great before he was

"made perfect through suffering," what must his glory be *now*, and what *will it be* when he comes at last to judgment? ver. 29.

That prayer in his saints is a duty which God delights to encourage and honour. It was while Christ prayed that his countenance was changed, ver. 29.

That they who are companions with Christ in his sufferings on earth, shall be witnesses and partakers of his glory in heaven, ver. 29.

That Christ is greater than the greatest of the prophets. Moses and Elias are sent from Heaven by God to honour him in this partial display of his glory, ver. 30.

That saints on leaving this world, are immediate partakers of heavenly glory. Moses and Elias appear in glory, as well as our Lord, ver. 31.

That if the death of Christ is the most interesting of all topics to the saints and angels in heaven, it ought more particularly to be the subject of contemplation and wonder to sinners upon earth, ver. 31.

That the Christian's most profitable improvement of high communion seasons, is in rendering death and the glory of heaven more familiar and desirable, ver. 31.

That death is the privilege, and not the punishment of God's people, ver. 31.

That watchfulness in religious exercises is our duty, and will turn to our advantage. One act of negligence here may deprive us of a word in season, or a view of God and ourselves, which may never again be vouchsafed to us on earth, ver. 32.

That good men in this imperfect state, are very inadequate judges of what is best for them. They too often prefer frail tabernacles on earth, to everlasting mansions in heaven, ver. 33.

That every display of Christ's glory in his word or ordinances, is a blessing conferred on his people. It is good for them "to be there," ver. 33.

That they who prefer earth to heaven, "know not what they say," ver. 33.

That the glories of heaven are too bright for human

eyes. God, in kindness to our weakness, for the present, screens them in a cloud, ver. 34.

That weakness of faith, and neglect of watchfulness, will sometimes make even good men afraid at the approach of death and glory. "They feared, as they entered the cloud," ver. 34.

That Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and the appointed prophet of his people. He reveals the will of the Almighty, who commands us to hear and obey him, ver. 36.

That in heaven alone is the felicity of the saints permanent. Seasons of high communion with God on earth are but transient and few. The heavenly messengers must depart, the glory of the Lord will remove, and we for a while must again be left alone, ver. 36.

That great prudence is at all times necessary in communicating, even to our Christian brethren, our spiritual frames and heavenly anticipations. "They kept it close," during *those days*, ver. 36.

SECTION XXV.

The Servant Debtors.—Matt. xviii. 23—35.

NARRATIVE.

AFTER descending from the mount of transfiguration, our Lord cured a young man who was afflicted with falling sickness, and again foretold his sufferings and death, (Matth. xvii. 14—23. Mark ix. 14—32. Luke ix. 37—45.) He then removed to Capernaum, where he directed Peter to get a piece of money from a fish's mouth, to pay the tax demanded from them; reproved the disciples for contending about the chief places; delivered the parable of the lost sheep, and enjoined the forgiveness of injuries. (Matth. xvii. 24—26. xviii. 22. Mark ix. 33—50. Luke ix. 46—50.) At this

time also, he delivered the parable of the Servant Debtors, which forms the subject of the present section.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 23. What is likened to a certain king? Of whom was he to take account? Who was to take account of his servants? 24. Who was brought to him? When was he brought to the king? How much did he owe? Who owed ten thousand talents? To whom did he owe this sum? 25. *What did his Lord command to be done with him?* Why was he to be sold? What else was to be sold with him? What was to be done with the price? 26. What did the servant do, when ordered to be sold? What did he ask his Lord? What did he promise to do? 27. *What effect had this on the king?* Whom did he loose? What did the king do respecting the debt? 28. Whom did this servant find when he went out? What did this servant owe him? *What did he do to him?* By what did he take him? What did he demand him to pay? 29. What did the servant do? What did he ask of him? What did he promise to do?—30. What would the first servant not do? Where did he cast him? Who was cast into prison? Till when was he cast into prison?—31. Who saw all this? What effect had it on them? To whom did they tell it? What did they tell?—32. Whom did the Lord call? What did he say he was? What had he done to him? Why did he forgive him the debt? 33. What should he also have had? On whom should he have compassion? Why should he have compassion on his fellow servant?—34. What effect had this conduct on the king? To whom did he deliver him? Till when was he delivered to the tormentors?—35. Whom should we forgive? In what manner ought we to forgive injuries? What will be done to us, if we do not forgive our brethren?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 23. *Kingdom of Heaven* here means, Christ's visible Church upon earth, and describes the manner in

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which he deals with his professed followers as to the forgiveness of injuries. *Take account*, Examine into the state of their accounts with him.

24. *Reckon*, Calculate the sums, and balance their accounts.—*Ten thousand talents*, A talent is about £187 10s. so that this servant owed above eighteen hundred thousand pounds.

25. *Forasmuch*, Because, or for this reason.

26. *Worshipped him*; this phrase here means, Earnestly besought him.—*Have patience*, Give me time.

27. *Compassion*, Pity.

28. *An Hundred pence*, A penny was about sevenpence half-penny, so that this servant owed about three guineas.

34. *Wrath*, Very angry.—*Tormentors*, Jailors, or executioners.

35. *Trespases*, Offences, evils committed.

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn,

That as we are not our own masters, but are all the servants of God, therefore we ought to be more diligent in his business than in our own, ver. 23.

That though the day of account may be long delayed, yet it will at last come, when God will reckon up every sin and every neglect, to the confusion and shame of all those who have refused Christ as their substitute and redeemer, ver. 23.

That the debt due by every sinner to the justice of God is beyond human calculation, ver. 24.

That though sinners owe *much*, they can pay *none*.—They are always adding to their debt, but “have nothing to pay,” ver. 25.

That they who have been partakers of the sinful festivities of the wicked, may expect to participate also in their punishments.—The wife and children had no doubt assisted the profligate servant in squandering the enor-

- mous sums which belonged to his master, and now with him they are condemned to be slaves, ver. 25.
- That the pride of the human heart tends to blind the sinner to his own impotence and poverty, and inclines him to promise what he will never be able to pay or perform, ver. 26.
- That a humbling view of our own impotency and real state before God, is one of the first operations of the Holy Spirit in the work of true conversion. Where this is wanting, and a self-righteous promising spirit remains, there is reason to fear, that the "dog will again return to its vomit, and the sow that has been washed to her wallowing in the mire," ver. 26.
- That God is merciful and compassionate even to the unthankful and to the evil. The apparent submission, and earnest cry of this unfaithful and ungodly servant, induce his master to suspend his punishment for a time, and give him and his family another opportunity to escape, ver. 27.
- That no debt is too great for a merciful God to forgive. —Ten thousand talents will as readily be remitted as the hundred pence, ver. 27.
- That sinners ought to be stimulated and encouraged in the exercise of prayer. It is the *wicked* prayers of the wicked, which are an abomination to the Lord; —The sincere and earnest, though as yet unenlightened, cry of the sinner will not be rejected by Him, who "despise not the day of small things," ver. 27.
- That a legal spirit is an uncharitable spirit; and they who think they can do most for themselves, are the least inclined to be lenient to others, ver. 28.
- That where there is only a profession of religion, while the heart remains unsubdued and unchanged, the conduct of the individual to his fellow christians will in general expose his true character. —"Hereby we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren," ver. 28.
- That as God has forgiven us ten thousand talents, we ought not to hesitate in forgiving the greatest injuries ver. 28.

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That it is our duty to acknowledge our debts, and with resignation and humility submit ourselves even to hard hearted and unreasonable creditors, ver. 29.

That they who are likest to God in their heart, are the farthest from oppression and cruelty in their conduct to others, ver. 30.

That every act of harshness or cruelty in a professing Christian, is a scandal to his profession, and ought to be cause of grief and regret to all good men, ver. 31.

That it is our duty to sympathize with those who are in distress, and to do what we can for their relief.—Though we ourselves perhaps are unable to pay the debt, we may solicit the assistance of others who can, ver. 32.

That unkindness or cruelty to our fellow-men is a mark of ingratitude to God. He does good to, and forgives us, that we also may do good to others, ver. 32.

That Christ is the example and pattern of charitable feeling and moral duty to all his followers, ver. 33.

That it is our true interest, as well as our duty to forgive injuries. They who now neglect this, and thus give evidence of their want of faith, will hereafter deplore their conduct, when they are called to account for their own debt to their almighty creditor, ver. 34.

That forgiveness of injuries is not a mere outward formal profession, but a genuine and sincere feeling of the mind, evidencing itself in the conduct.—We must “forgive from the heart,” ver. 35.

SECTION XXVI.

Jesus cures a man born blind.—John ix. 1—12.

See also, from ver. 13—38.

NARRATIVE.

AFTER delivering the parable of the Servant Debtors, our Lord went up to Jerusalem, to the passover, (Matt. xix. 1, 2.—Mark x. 1.) and while preach-

ing in the temple, officers were sent to apprehend him; but they being charmed by his eloquence, returned without having had resolution to do so. (John vii. 2—53.—viii. 1.) Next day, a woman taken in adultery, was brought to Christ in the temple, whom he allows to depart, and delivers a discourse, regarding his own power and character; after which he narrowly escaped being stoned, by removing himself to another place. (John viii. 2—59.) On his way, he met a beggar, who was born blind; and having anointed his eyes with clay, he desired him to wash in the pool of Siloam, and he would receive his sight.—This the blind man did; and being questioned by the Jews, was cast out of the synagogue, for confessing Jesus to be the Christ.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 1. Who passed by? Whom did he see? What was he? From what time was he blind?—2. Who asked Jesus about this man? What did they call Jesus? *What did they suppose the man or his parents had done?* What did they suppose was the effects of their sin?—3. Who answered this question? Who had not thus sinned? Whose works were to be made manifest? In whom were the works of God to be made manifest? By what were the works of God to be made manifest?—4. Who was to work? What was he to work? When was he to work? What was to come? What cannot be done in the night?—5. What does Jesus say he was? How long was he to be the light of the world?—6. What did Jesus do when he had thus spoken? On what did he spit? What did he make? Of what did he make the clay? What did he anoint? *With what did he anoint the blind man's eyes?*—7. Where did he bid the blind man go? What was he to do at the pool of Siloam? What is the interpretation of the word "Siloam?" What did the blind man do? In what state did he return?—8. Who remarked this change on the blind man? What did they ask each other? 9. What did some of the people say? What

did others say? What did the man say?—10. What did they ask the man concerning his eyes? Who asked this?—11. Who did he say had made clay? What did he say Jesus had done with the clay? What had Jesus bidden him do? What did the man do? What was the consequence of his doing this?—12. *What did the people ask him?* What was his answer?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 2. *Who did sin?* What flagrant crime was committed, to deserve this punishment?

3. *Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents,* His blindness has not been occasioned by any flagrant sin committed by this man, in some previous state of existence, as they erroneously seem to suppose; nor yet by the sins of his parents before he was born.—*Made manifest,* Conspicuously displayed.

4. *Him that sent me,* God the Father, who sent Jesus his only begotten Son to save sinners.—*While it is day,* While I am yet alive.—*The night cometh,* The time of death is approaching.

5. *The light of the world,* He who alone can save man from their natural darkness, and enlighten them in the true knowledge of God, and themselves.

7. *Which is by interpretation,* The meaning of which is.

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn,

That we ought not only to be contented with our lot, but also grateful to God for the happiness we enjoy in being free from great temporal afflictions, with which he is sometimes pleased to visit others, ver. 1. That we ought to look on and consider the afflictions of others, that we may if possible help to relieve them, ver. 1.

That ignorance, or a contracted view of the dealings of God in his providence, is the cause of great practical errors in our judgment of others, ver. 2.

That temporal calamities, or severe trials, are no sure sign of God's displeasure, ver. 3.

That the design of all the chequered circumstances in providence is the glory of God, and that the wonders of his mercy or his judgments may be made manifest to men, ver. 3.

That as all afflictions sent to the people of God, tend to promote his glory, and will at last do them good, they ought to be received with resignation, and borne without murmuring, ver. 3.

That a due consideration of the shortness of time, should increase our diligence in preparing for eternity, ver. 4.

That the term of our life upon earth, is the only time allowed us to prepare for eternity.—The night of death cometh "when no man can work," ver. 4.

That they who would see clearly the way to heaven, must derive their light from the gospel of Christ.—He alone is the light of the world, ver. 5.

That though God generally uses means for the accomplishment of his purposes, yet he neither confines himself to them, nor always employs those which, in the opinion of men, are the most likely to answer the end in view.—Clay, which would blind others, is here made the means of this blind man's cure, ver. 6.

That the proud and the captious exclude themselves from the blessings of the gospel; while the humble, believing, and obedient sinner, secures the blessing and receives the cure, ver. 7.

That a child-like obedience to the commandments of Christ, is at once the best means of shewing our gratitude, and promoting our own advantage, ver. 7.

That the change produced in the sinner by the power and goodness of Christ, is cause of wonder and astonishment to the men of the world, ver. 8.

That the previous life and conduct of the renewed sinner will often be made the subject of contempt and reproach to the men of the world, ver. 8.

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That the converted sinner will not refuse to acknowledge his former state, when that shall produce glory to God, ver. 9.

That the goodness and mercy of God to others should make us anxious to know the extent of his power, that our own souls may be benefited by his grace, ver. 10.

That a recommendation of Christ to sinners, is the duty of all who have been benefited by his grace, ver. 11.

That the wonders of Christ's mercy, as exhibited in the salvation of sinners, should excite in us a stronger desire to become better acquainted with him; Our language should be, "Where is he?" ver. 12.

That the dealings of Christ with his people are always wise, though often various. They who have had extraordinary instances of his favour and presence while they were spiritually blind, are sometimes left to deplore his absence, after they see, ver. 12.

SECTION XXVII.

The Parable of the good Samaritan.—
Luke x. 25—37.

NARRATIVE.

AFTER the noise, caused in Jerusalem by the cure of the man born blind, our Lord resolutely set his face to go up to Jerusalem. On his way he was refused lodgings in a Samaritan village, which the disciples wished him to destroy. For this he rebuked them, and departed to another village, on the way to which he conversed with different individuals, who desired to follow him. (Luke ix. 51—62.) Here he sent out the seventy disciples, two and two, who again returned, and gave him an account of their mission. (Luke x. 1—24.) A doctor of the law, who, it is probable, was present at the report given in by the seventy, asked our Lord, what

he should do to inherit eternal life. The answer, that he should love God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself, gave rise to the question, "Who is my neighbour?" This our Lord answered by delivering the parable of the Good Samaritan, the subject of the present section.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 25. Who stood up? For what did he stand up? Whom did he tempt? What did he wish to inherit? What did he ask respecting eternal life?—26. Who answered him? What did Jesus ask him respecting the law? What did he ask him as to his reading?—27. Whom did the lawyer say we are to love? With what are we to love him? Whom else are we to love besides God? How are we to love our neighbour?—28. Who answered the lawyer? How did our Lord say the lawyer had answered? What was he to do? What would be the consequence if he did all this.—29. What did the lawyer wish to do? What did he ask our Lord?—30. Who went down from Jerusalem? Whither did he go? *Among whom did he fall?* Of what did they strip him? What else did they do to him? What did they do when they had wounded him? How did they leave him?—31. *Who came down by chance?* Whom did he see? What did he do when he saw him? Where did he pass by?—32. Who else passed by? What did he do as he passed by?—33. Who had compassion on him? When had he compassion on him? What was the Samaritan doing in that place?—34. Who went to the man? *What did he bind up?* What did he pour in? On what did he set him? Where did he bring him? What did he do to him when brought to the inn?—35. When did he depart? What did he give to the landlord? What did he bid him do to the man? What did he promise to repay him?—36. What did our Lord ask regarding these three men?—37. Who did the lawyer say was the Samaritan's neighbour? What did Jesus bid him do?

EXPLANATIONS.

ar. 25. *Lawyer*, One that expounded the law.—

pted, Tried.—*Inherit*, Come into the possession of.

5. *The law*, The books of Moses and the old Testament.

7. *With all my heart, and with all my soul*, &c. that With the whole united powers of both body and soul.

Thy neighbour, Thy brethren of mankind.

28. *Shalt live*, Shalt be saved.

29. *To justify himself*, To shew that he was, as he ought, blameless.

32. *Levite*, One of the tribe of Levi, who were the teachers and ministers of the Jews.

33. *Samaritan*, One belonging to the country of Samaria, who were at variance with the Jews, by whom they were hated and despised.—See John iv. 9.—*Journeyed*, Travelled this way on his journey.—*Compassion*, Pity.

35. *Two-Pence*, About fifteen pence; a Roman penny being about seven pence half-penny sterling.

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn,

That fair appearances in religion, and enquiries about the gospel, are not always to be depended on as marks of true conversion. Good questions may be asked, and fair pretences made, from improper, and even from malicious motives, ver. 25.

That every matter of doubt, either as to doctrine or duty, ought to be decided, not by the opinions or practices of men, but simply by the word of God, ver. 26.

That many who profess in words to know the law, are deplorably ignorant of its spirituality and extent, ver. 27.

That they who trust in the perfection of their own works, for acceptance with God, must be disappointed. The righteousness of Christ alone comes up to the demands of the law, and by it alone we can be saved, ver. 28.

That the great object of the carnal mind in religious inquiries, is not so much the acquirement of truth, as procuring the means of self-justification, ver. 29.

That nominal professors are much more anxious about their duty to men, than they are about their duty to God, ver. 29.

That man in his natural state is wretched, and miserable, and naked, and helpless, ver. 30.

That hard heartedness and want of compassion, are detestable in all, but particularly in the ministers or teachers of religion, ver. 31, 32.

That compassionate looks and fair speeches, are no sure indications of genuine compassion and christian charity, ver. 32.

That enemies and strangers are often more compassionate and kind, than our friends and neighbours, ver. 33.

That when help is refused us by friends and relations Christ, the good Samaritan, is always ready to send us help, ver. 33.

That pretended compassion, without any effort to render assistance to those who are in distress, is mere hypocrisy. Personal services, and self-denying acts, are the sure indications of genuine christian charity, ver. 34.

That Christ's care of his people is not merely for the present moment, but has an eye also to their comfort and security in the time to come, ver. 35.

That the character of men is to be decided by conduct and not by opinion. "By their *works* ye shall know them," ver. 36.

That as they whose prejudices are opposed to the truth may yet be won by its force, if their prejudices can be evaded, let us, in our intercourse with the world endeavour to "be wise to win souls," ver. 37.

That as Christ, the Good Samaritan, has done much for us, we ought to follow his example, in doing good to others, ver. 37.

SECTION XXVIII.

The Rich Glutton.—Luke xii. 13—21.

NARRATIVE.

AFTER delivering the parable of the good Samaritan, our Lord went up to Jerusalem, to the feast of dedication. On the way, he lodged for a night at Bethany, with Martha and Mary. (Luke x. 38—42.) On arriving at Jerusalem, he found the beggar who was born blind, and whom he restored to sight, and revealed himself to him as the Messiah. (John ix. 35—41.) At the same time, he delivered his discourse, recorded in John x. 1—21, and answered the Jews who questioned him in Solomon's porch. These Jews seeking to kill him, he escaped from them, and fled to beyond Jordan, where he for some time abode. (John x. 22—42.) Here he taught his disciples to pray, and illustrated the importance of importunity in prayer, by the parable of the importunate friend. (Luke xi. 1—13.) Here also, after casting out a devil, the conversation took place, and the parables were delivered, recorded in Luke xi. 14—36. About this time, he dined with a Pharisee, and denounced heavy woes against them and the Scribes. Afterwards, while beyond Jordan, he delivered the discourse recorded in Luke xii. 1—12; and on a man wishing him to persuade his brother to divide the inheritance with him, he delivered the parable of the rich glutton, which forms the subject of the present section.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 13. Who spake unto Jesus? What did he call him? What did he wish him to divide? With whom did he wish to divide the inheritance? 14. What did Jesus call him? What question did he ask him? 15. To whom did our Lord direct the remainder of this discourse? What did he desire them to beware of? What does the happiness of a man's life not consist in? 16. What did Jesus speak to them? Of whom did he speak?

What is said of this rich man's ground?—17. For what did he want room? What question did he put to himself on account of this want of room?—18. What did he resolve to do with his barns? What was he to do when he pulled them down? What was he to do with the large barns?—19. To what did he then propose to speak? What did he say the soul would have laid up? For how long a time? What did he propose the soul should do?—20. Who spake to him? What did God call him? What was required of him? When was his soul required of him? What did he ask as to the things which he had provided?—21. Who does our Lord say is like this man? For whom does he lay up treasure? What is he not towards God?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 13. *Inheritance*, Property left, probably by their parents.

15. *Covetousness*, Having an undue desire for that which belongs to another.—*A man's life*, The happiness of a man's life.—*Consisteth not*, Is not made up, or composed of.

17. *Bestow*, Lay up.

18. *Barns*, Houses for holding grain.

21. *Layeth up treasure for himself*, Is desirous of this world's goods for his own use only.—*Rich towards God*, Procuring and using all our earthly advantages and spiritual privileges for the glory of God.

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn,

That we ought not to profess to be the servants of God, for the purpose of forwarding our worldly interests, ver. 13.

That covetousness is the cause of much ill-will and uncharitable conduct towards others, and of much disquietude and unhappiness to ourselves, ver 13.

That they who have the care of souls, ought to be cautious how they intermeddle in worldly matters. They

like their Lord, ought not to lessen their spiritual usefulness to any, by becoming judges and dividers of worldly goods, ver. 14.

That we ought always to be on our guard against the love of the world and the sins of the heart, ver. 15.

That happiness is not to be found in riches. A man may labour for the good things of the world, but without the blessing of God, he cannot enjoy them, ver. 15.

That outward prosperity is no sure mark of the divine favour. God frequently afflicts his people for their good, while he allows the wicked to prosper, ver. 16.

That riches, instead of removing care, often increase it. "What shall I do?" is the language of the covetous rich, as well as of the miserable poor, ver. 17.

That the love and approbation of God alone, can satisfy the soul.—The worldly-minded man deceiveth himself when he thinks that riches will satisfy him; for when these are attained, he finds the soul as empty as ever, ver. 17.

That happiness to the covetous man is always at a distance.—The present good cannot be enjoyed, till something remote be first attained, ver. 18.

That the restless disposition of the ungodly, induces them often to reject or destroy the good they presently possess, in the vain hope of procuring a larger portion of worldly good hereafter, ver. 18.

That sinful and inordinate sensual indulgence destroys the relish and the capacity for spiritual enjoyments, ver. 19.

That they who are tempted to place their happiness in the things of the world, are in great danger of losing sight of death and eternity, ver. 19.

That worldly men are foolish men.—They neglect heaven for the sake of the world; destroy the immortal soul for the sake of the perishing body; and cast away the eternal glories of heaven for the fleeting vanities of time and sense, ver. 20.

That the best treasure to lay up for children after parents are dead, is the benefit of a religious education and a good example. Riches may be squandered, titles may

be dishonoured ; but genuine piety and the blessing of God, confer happiness here and secure it for eternity, ver. 20.

That as time is uncertain, we ought always to be on our guard, that we may be ready when our soul is required of us, ver. 20.

That they who lay up treasure only for themselves, are substantially poor ; while they who dedicate themselves and their substance to God, are truly rich, ver. 21.

SECTION XXIX.

The Barren Fig Tree.—Luke xiii. 1—9.

NARRATIVE.

AFTER delivering the parable of the Rich Glutton, and the discourses and parables recorded in the 12th chapter of Luke, Jesus was told of the Galileans who were slain in the temple by Pilate, (Luke xiii. 1—9.) at which time he explained to them, that it is not on account of greater wickedness in individuals, that adverse circumstances in providence occur to them ; and warned them, that unless they repented, they also must perish ; explaining their danger, and exciting them to make no delay, by delivering the parable of the Barren Fig Tree, which forms the subject of this section.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 1. Of whom did the people tell Jesus ? What had been done to them ? Who had done this ? What did he mix with their sacrifices ?—2. Who answered to this ? What did they suppose these Galileans were ? What made them suppose these Galileans greater sinners than their neighbours ?—3. What was Christ's opinion ? What did he exhort them to do ? What did

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What would be the consequence if they did not repent ;
 What tower fell ? On how many did it fall ?
 it was the consequence of its falling ? What did
 it do about them ?—5. What was his opinion of them ?
 it did he exhort them to do ? If they did not,
 what would be the consequence ?—6. What did he
 say ? Who did he say had a fig tree ? Where had
 he planted this fig tree ? What had he come to seek ?
 what did he come to seek fruit ? What did he
 say ?—7. To whom did he address himself ? What
 did he say he had been seeking ? On what did he seek
 ? How long had he sought fruit ? What had
 his success in seeking fruit ? What did it do to
 the ground ? What did he order the dresser of the
 table to do ?—8. Who answered to this order ?
 What did the dresser request he might do ? For how
 long was he to spare it ? What did he propose to do to
 it ?—9. What would be well ? What was to be done
 if it did not bear fruit ?

EXPLANATIONS.

τ. 1. *Whose blood Pilate had mingled with their
 flesh,* Put them to death, while offering sacrifices in
 temple.

Cumbereth, Uselessly takes up room.

LESSONS.

From this section we learn,

that as no place and no employment can secure us from
 the stroke of death, we should always be ready, whe-
 ther in acts of devotion, or in the avocations of world-
 business, ver. 1.

that persecution may follow God's people even to his al-
 ternate. He knows best in what frame, and at what
 time to remove them to himself, ver. 1.

that a charitable construction of the character of our
 neighbour, is the duty of the christian. Let us not
 draw uncharitable inferences from circumstances,
 which will bear a more favourable interpretation, ver. 1.
 that adverse circumstances in providence, are no sure

signs of God's displeasure. He is sovereign in dealings with men, and sometimes afflicts the righteous for their good, while the blessings of the wise become to them a snare, ver. 2.

That repentance of sin, arising from a belief of truth, is necessary for salvation.—Wherever there is a lively faith in the declarations of scripture as to the nature and effects of sin, and the only means of escape from its pollution and power by the death of Christ, repentance must follow, ver. 3.

That ordinary afflictive accidents in the prosecution of lawful duty, are no more signs of God's displeasure than martyrdom in the celebration of divine worship, ver. 4.

That as all who enjoy the means of grace, are represented as fig trees planted, and watered, and cared for by God, they shall have no excuse if they are at length found barren, and are cut down and destroyed for want of fruit, ver. 6.

That where God has blessed us with means of improvement, it is but reasonable to expect a suitable return in the increasing holiness of our heart, and the usefulness and purity of our lives, ver. 6.

That it is well for us individually to count, and to answer to our own consciences, the length of time during which we have reason to fear, we have resisted the influences of the Spirit of God.—Every day, every Sabbath, every opportunity of grace, God has been sending fruit; but, alas! how long has he sought in vain, ver. 7.

That the long-sparing mercy of God, often tends to harden and confirm sinners in their unprofitable ways.
“Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil,” ver. 7.

That the day of grace will come to a close.—If the present long-sparing mercy of God, produce not repentance in the sinner, it will at last close in his complete destruction, ver. 7.

That it is not only those who produce the evil fruits

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... a wicked life who are cumberers of the ground ; but those also who refrain to produce the fruits of faith and holiness, ver. 7.

That the wickedness and backwardness of those in whom we are interested, should excite us to more earnest prayer on their behalf. " Lord spare them this year also," ver. 8.

That prayers for the conversion of those around us, should excite us also to greater diligence in the use of means for their spiritual welfare. Some mean which has formerly been neglected, or which has proved ineffective should be tried again, and which may yet produce the effects we so anxiously desire, ver. 8.

That if any one of the means used for the conversion of sinners, however laborious or expensive, shall at last prove successful, it will infinitely repay all the trouble and expense of the whole, ver. 9.

That even the nearest and dearest friends of the sinner, will have at last to acknowledge the justice of that judgment, with which God shall overwhelm the impenitent, ver. 9.

SECTION XXX.

The Marriage Supper.—Luke xiv. 15 - 24.

NARRATIVE.

BEING in one of the synagogues beyond Jordan, after delivering the parable of the fig tree, our Lord cured the woman who was bowed together, and delivered the parable of the mustard seed, and the parable of the leaven. Then, a second time, journeying to Jerusalem, he, on the road, instructed his disciples,—was desired to leave Herod's dominions,—and bewailed Jerusalem, (Luke xiii. 10—35.) About the same time, dining in the house of a ruler, he delivered the parable of

the marriage supper, which forms the subject of the present Section.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 15. Who spake to Christ? When did he speak? Of what kingdom did he speak? Who did he say would be blessed?—16. Who answered this person? What did Jesus say was made? By whom was this supper made? What number was bidden to this supper?—17. Who were sent? When were the servants sent? To whom were they sent? *For what purpose were they sent?* What did the servants bid them do? Why were they to come?—18. What did they who were bidden begin to do? *What proportion of them began to make excuses?* What had the first bought? What had he to do? What did he pray?—19. How many oxen had the second bought? What had he to do? What did he pray?—20. What had the third done? What did his marriage prevent him from doing?—21. What did the servant do after hearing these excuses? Who was angry? Whom did he desire to go out? Where did he desire him to go? *Whom was he to bring in?* 22. What did the servant say was done? What did he say there was yet?—23. Where was the servant sent the second time? What was he to do there? For what purpose were they to come in?—24. Who were not to taste of the supper? Who said this? To whom did the Lord say this?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 15. *Eat bread in the kingdom of heaven*, Enjoy fellowship and communion with God and the saints in the heavenly world.

19. *Yoke of oxen*, Two oxen; two being generally coupled by the yoke for farming purposes.

21. *Lanes*, The narrow streets in a town or city, sometimes called closes and wynds.—*Maimed*, Those de-

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rived of limbs, or other parts of the body.—*Halt* cripple.

23. *Highways and hedges*, Public roads leading into the country, and the hedges by their sides, where the poor sometimes take refuge.—*Compel*, Earnestly entreat them, without taking a refusal.

ILLUSTRATION OF THE SYMBOLS.

Great supper, The gospel dispensation, which God has prepared for the salvation and happiness of sinners, by the death of his Son Jesus Christ.

Bade many, God at first declared the message of mercy to the Jews, whom he chose from among all nations in favour and bless them; but they rejected Christ, refused to partake of the blessings of his gospel, persecuted him, and at last slew him.

They also in our own day, who enjoy the ordinances of the gospel, are in them invited to partake of its blessings; but when they prefer their estates, their shops, or their domestic comforts to Christ, they are like those who made these excuses and would not come.

Servants, The prophets, apostles, and ministers of the gospel, who are the honoured messengers of God, to carry this gracious invitation to sinners around them.

Poor, halt, maimed, &c. in the lanes of the city, may mean, the Publicans and sinners among the Jews; and those in the highways and hedges, the Gentiles and the Heathen. In general, they mean wicked and profligate sinners. For those whom men despise, God sometimes chooses for himself, that he may put the pride and ingratitude of the morally good to shame, for rejecting every righteousness but their own.

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn,

That many whose imaginations are filled with the glories of heaven, pay too little attention to the means of getting there, ver. 15.

That as the plan of salvation by Jesus Christ is a *great* work, a *great* supper prepared by the infinite condes-

cension of God, for the salvation and sinners and rebels, we will be most unwise to ourselves, if we shall do it, ver. 16.

That the supper of the gospel is not which can satisfy but a few. God invites *all*,—and says, “Whosoever will of the water of life freely,” ver. 16.

That ministers, teachers, and parents, &c. to declare the freeness of the gospel people, pupils, or families, are the hangers of God; and as such should not but follow out the wish of their Master means persuade and intreat sinners to wrath to come, ver. 17.

That there is nothing wanting in the gospel on God’s part; for all is prepared the sinner is willing to sit down at the fulness of an infinite God is pledged needs, ver. 17.

That the heart of man is by nature blungrateful. The supper that has come and without which the sinner must be rejected by him; as if his coming was doing God a favour, ver. 18.

That to those who have no heart to thing, however trivial, will serve as a neglecting it. Worldly business and we are then preferred to the interests of soul, ver. 18.

That things lawful in themselves become ungodly.—When the good things of excuses for the rejection of his gospel dangerous, and likely to become a curse.

That indulgence in the pleasures of the men bolder in their rejection of the gospel its business or its cares.—Such will found forming no excuse for their cor asserting that they cannot, or rather not come, ver. 20.

that the want of success in the messengers of Christ, should lead them with their complaints and their regrets to himself.—Success in their work should encourage them to go forward, but the want of success should not induce them to stop, ver. 21.

that though we reject the gospel, the kingdom of God shall not want inhabitants. Others, whom perhaps we despised, shall take our place, while we are cast out from his house for ever, ver. 21.

that there is no such thing as over-crowding the kingdom of heaven. . However many have entered, and however many may yet be admitted, there is still room for us, if we are only willing to become its inhabitants, by faith in Jesus Christ, ver. 22.

that strong persuasions and entreaties for sinners to come to Christ, are the duty of all who declare the extent and freeness of the gospel. Some may think themselves unfit, and others unworthy, and others be careless and indifferent ; but such ought earnestly to be entreated, and exhorted, and compelled, as it were, to try the blessedness which uniformly accompanies a cordial reception of the gospel, ver. 23.

that the day of grace and the offers of the gospel, will come to an end. When, after repeated solicitations, the Master of the house has risen up and shut to the door, it will then be too late to accept an invitation which has been so frequently and so urgently pressed, but so ungratefully and uncereemoniously rejected, ver. 24.

SECTION XXXI.

The Prodigal Son.—Luke xv. 11—32.

NARRATIVE.

OUR Lord, proceeding by easy stages towards Jerusalem, exhorted his followers to self-denial ; delivered the parables of the rash builder, the warrior, and

the salt that had lost its savour, (Luke xiv. 35—) He afterwards delivered the parables of the lost *sheep* and lost money, (Luke xv. 1—10.) and then the parable of the prodigal son, which forms the subject of the present section.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 11. How many sons had this certain man?
 12. Which of them applied to the father? For what did he apply? What did the father divide? Before whom did he divide his living?—13. Who gathered his goods together? When did he do this? Where did he go? What did he waste? *Where did he waste his substance?* How did he waste his substance? What arose in the land? When did this famine arise? What was the consequence of these two things? To whom did he join himself? Where was he? What was his employment in the fields?—16. What had he a desire to eat? What prevented him from eating the husks?—17. Of whose bread did he begin to think? Who had bread enough to spare? When did he begin to think of this? What was his present condition?—18. What did he resolve to do? What was the first thing he resolved to do? To whom was he to say this? Before whom had he sinned? Against what had he sinned?—19. What was the second thing he resolved to say? What was he worthy to be called? What was the third thing he resolved to say? What was he to request his father to make him?—20. What did he do after this resolution? To whom did he go? Who saw him? Where did he see him? What were the father's feelings when he saw him? *What did he do when he first saw him?* What did he fall? What did he do when he fell on his neck?—21. What did the son call him? What was the confession he made? Of what did he say he was unworthy? Did he ask to be made a servant as he had proposed?—22. To whom did the father address himself? What were the servants to bring forth? *What were they to do with the best robe?* What was the

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put on his hand? What were to be put on his feet? 23. What were they to kill? What were they then to do?—24. Who did he say had been dead? What was he now? Who was lost? What was he now? What did they begin to be?—25. Who was in the field? What did he hear? When did he hear this?—26. Whom did he call? What did he ask?—27. Who did the servant say was come? What did he say his father had done? Why had he done this?—28. *Who was angry?* What would he not do? Who came out to him? What did his father do when he came out?—29. How long did the son say he had served his father? What had he not done at any time? What had his father never given him? What would he have done with the kid?—30. Who was come? What does he say he had done? What did he say the father had done for him?—31. What did the father call him? What did he say he was? What did he say was his?—32. What was it meet they should be? What did he say his younger brother had been? What was he now?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 12. *Portion*, Part.—*Which falleth to me*, Which comes to my share.—*His living*, His goods, or substance.

13. *Riotous living*, Living in a disorderly, sinful, and extravagant manner.

14. *Famine*, Scarcity of food.

15. *Joined himself to a citizen of that country*, Hired himself as a servant to an inhabitant, or person having property in that distant country.

16. *Husks*, Outer skins, hulls, or shells of vegetables, or the refuse of grain.

17. *When he came to himself*, When his mind settled down to serious reflection.—*Perish*, Die.

18. *Sinned against heaven*, Sinned against the God of heaven.

20. *Compassion*, Pity.

24. *Was dead*, Was dead to his family and to well-doing.

28. *Entreated him*, Earnestly desired him to c

29. *Kid*, Young goat.

30. *Devoured thy living*, Consumed and destroy goods thou gavest him.—*Harlots*, Women of baser character.

ILLUSTRATION OF THE SYMBOLS

Father of the two sons, God, the Father of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ; gracious and kind to all, even to the unthankful the evil ; who is very merciful, and is at all times to receive and forgive the penitent sinner, howe he may have gone astray.

The elder brother, The self-righteous ; persons of good, and outwardly decent, who think they are more at God's hand than they get, and are always fenced at the humbling level of the gospel, who receives all as sinners, and none otherwise. It is like it was intended to point out more immediately the rises, in the time of our Lord, who took such at the conversion and cordial reception of publican sinners.

The younger son, Those who, weary of religious restraint, give a loose to the inclinations of their own hearts, " forsaking the guide of their youth, as getting the covenant of their God." Such are the of Satan, the world, and their own lusts, whose is misery, and whose wages are death. Such, however, will still be received by their heavenly Father, if they will but return in the spirit of repentance, and his mercy and grace through a crucified Redeemer.

Citizen of the distant country, Satan, the world, and corrupt heart, who are the cruel task masters wicked, by whom they are led captive at their will from whom they receive nothing but disappointment, gradation, and misery.

LESSONS.

From this section we learn,

That youth is the season when the restraints of religion and discipline are most irksome, but necessary, ver. 12.

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That God sometimes, in just judgment, grants the desire of the sinner, though it tends to his hurt, ver. 12.

That they who in youth feel controul irksome, and take the earliest opportunity to get from under the eye of parents or guardians, are on the fair way to ruin, both of body and soul, ver. 13.

That the riches, and sinful pleasures of the world, are transitory and unsatisfying.—While they last, their votaries “are not come to themselves;” when they are gone, they leave misery and want behind, ver. 14.

That when afflictions do not reclaim the sinner, they render him more degraded, and more wretched than before.—He that will not return to be a son, must continue to be a slave, ver. 15.

That absence from God is a state of famine and want. The husks of the world will never satisfy the soul. Nothing short of the bread which cometh down from heaven, can fill the desires of an immortal mind, ver. 18.

That a state of sinful indulgence, is a state of mental and moral derangement.—It is not till the sinner “comes to himself,” that he sees his state, and resolves to apply for the remedy, ver. 17.

That afflictions are often unspeakable blessings to the wicked.—They who meet no impediment in the course of sin, are most likely to continue its course, till it end in their destruction, ver. 17.

That early religious education and habits, are of great value.—They may indeed lie long hid, and allow the sinner to make wide strides in wickedness; yet at last, in the time of languor or distress, they may call to his recollection the good he has left, and by the grace of God be the means of suggesting a return to his Father's house, ver. 17, 18.

That resolutions of amendment should always accompany convictions of sin. Though good resolutions are often formed without being carried into effect, yet there is no hope of reform, where they never take place, ver. 18.

That true penitence, and a thorough conviction of the good which the soul has lost by sin, and may yet gain by repentance, will so mortify the pride of the sinner, as to make him willing to be any thing or nothing, for his soul's sake, ver. 19.

That repentance and holy resolutions, should be immediately followed by corresponding activity in returning to God. Delay in this stage is dangerous, and often fatal to the soul, ver. 20.

That parents ought not to be too harsh, or too distant to the first indications of repentance in backsliding children. It is best to follow the example of our heavenly Father, who sees his returning Son *at a distance*, and gives him more than hope of complete forgiveness, ver. 20.

That God sees, and rejoices to meet the returning penitent. While the sinner is yet a great way off, the grace and spirit which first inclined him to return, give him more and more clear manifestations of the kindness and forgiveness of God, dispel the doubts of his unbelief, and inspire him with the spirit of adoption, which enables him, with deep humility and sincere affection to cry, "Abba, Father," ver. 21.

That God's ways are not as our ways. He knows best on whom to bestow the best robe; and though men may wonder at the selection, it will at last be found, that it was done in great wisdom, as well as justice, ver. 22.

That the return of sinners to Christ, should be made the subject of thankfulness to God, a stimulus for our further exertions, and a cause of rejoicing to all, ver. 23, 24.

That formalists and hypocrites, may generally be known by their displeasure at, and unbelief in, the real conversion of sinners. They who think they have never transgressed, cannot endure to share the inheritance with those whom they have formerly despised, ver. 28.

That the self-righteous are always ready to praise their own goodness, and detract from God's. They think *they deserve* more than they have received from his

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hands ; without considering, that, " when they have done all, they are but unprofitable servants," ver 29. That the pride of the human heart will sometimes lead the self-righteous to offer insult to God himself. This *thy* son hath devoured thy living with harlots ; he may be *thy son*, but I will not own him for *my brother*, ver. 30.

That we ought to endeavour meekly to reconcile sinners to God's doings. They who fret at the mercy of God to their fellows, ought to be put in mind of their own mercies ; and that they must not be sorry for that, at which God and angels rejoice, ver. 31, 32.

SECTION XXXII.

The Unjust Steward.—Luke xvi. 1—13.

NARRATIVE.

OUR Lord having exhibited in the parable of the Prodigal Son, the kindness and mercy of God to returning sinners, proceeded to draw the contrast betwixt the conduct of worldly men in attaining temporal good, and the remissness and indifference of God's people in attaining the highest degrees of holiness here, and happiness hereafter. The men of the world, though the objects they seek are mere vanity, are found zealously improving to the utmost, the opportunities, and even the disadvantages, which sometimes occur to them in life, for the acquirement of riches, or honour, or pleasures : While Christians, who should have eternity in their eye, frequently allow opportunities of the greatest importance to pass unobserved, or unimproved. This our Lord illustrated by the following parable of the Unjust Steward.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 1. To whom did our Lord speak ? Who had a steward ? Who was accused unto him ? Of what was he accused ? Whose goods did the steward waste ?—

2. Whom did the master call? What had he heard of him? Of what was he to give an account? Why was he to give an account of his stewardship?—3. Who spake within himself? What did he ask himself? What was his lord to do with his stewardship? What could he not do? What was he ashamed to do?—4. *About whose conduct did he resolve?* Where did he hope they would receive him? When would they receive him into their houses?—5. Whom did he call? How many of his lord's debtors did he call? To whom did he call them? What did he ask the first?—6. How much did he owe his lord? What did the steward bid him take? What was he then to do? How many measures was he to put down instead of the hundred?—7. What did he ask the next? How much did he owe? What did the steward bid him take? How many measures of wheat did he bid him write instead of the hundred?—8. Whom did his lord commend? *For what did he commend him?* Who are wise in their generation? Than whom are they wiser?—9. *Of what were they to make themselves friends?* Who bid them do this? Why were they to make themselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness? Into what would they be received?—10. What will he be who is faithful in little? What will he be who is unjust in little?—11. What would not be committed to their trust? To whose trust will the true riches not be committed?—12. What would not be given to them? Who will not receive that which belongs to themselves?—13. What can no servant do? What would he do to the one? What would he do to the other? When he held to the one, what would he do to the other? Whom can we not serve at the same time?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 1. *Disciples*, Scholars, or followers.—*Steward*, A person who collected his rents and debts, and managed his affairs.

2. *Stewardship*, The office of steward; the manner in which thou hast performed thine office.

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3. *I cannot dig, &c.* I cannot now work like a common servant or labourer ; and I am ashamed to beg.

5. *Debtors*, Those who were due money to his Lord.

6. *Take thy bill*, Take the envoice received with the goods, or thy books in which the delivery is entered.

8. *The Lord commended the unjust steward*, His master gave him credit for the wisdom and policy of the act, though he did not approve of its justice.—*Children of this world*, Worldly and ungodly people, who live only for this world.—*Children of light*, Children of knowledge. Christians are so called, as they are not infatuated and blinded by the things of this life, from beholding the greater importance of the life after death.

9. *Mammon* here means, principally *Riches* ; but in a more extended sense, it may mean whatever a person confides in, whether it be honour, power, knowledge, riches, &c.—*Unrighteous mammon* here means, Deceitful, uncertain, vain, and unprofitable riches.—*When ye fail*, When they are taken from you, or when you are removed from them by death.—*Everlasting habitations*, God's everlasting kingdom in Heaven

13. *Hold to the one*, Attach himself to the service of the one, and refuse obedience to the other.—*Ye cannot serve God and mammon*, Ye cannot supremely love or put your confidence and trust in the things of this world, and at the same time love and serve God, who demands the whole heart and affections of all his people.

ILLUSTRATION OF THE SYMBOLS.

The design of this parable is principally to shew, that the ungodly, who have a reference only to *this life*, shew great ingenuity, and are very assiduous in taking advantage of every circumstance which occurs to promote their temporal prosperity, which is the alone grand object they have in view ; while the people of God allow their attention to be distracted from God, and heaven, and eternity, and allow precious opportunities of usefulness to pass without observation, and without improvement.

More generally it may be remarked, that *the rich man who had a steward*, means God, the Lord and Master of all his creatures, who bestows the good things of this world, whether they be riches, honours, influence, power, capacity, wisdom, or time, on his several servants, to be used as his property, and solely for his glory. They are here put in mind, that although at present they have the sole management of these talents in their own power, yet that the time will come when they must render an account of their stewardship, and when God will condemn and punish every instance of fraud and selfishness, where his servants have taken those goods, and appropriated them solely to their *own use*, without reference to him as their owner.

The steward who wasted his master's goods, points out the selfishness of the ungodly rich, who forget from whom their riches are derived, and to whom they belong; using them altogether for themselves, the pampering of their own lusts, and promoting of their own pleasures. God has given them riches for a certain and specified purpose; and "whether they eat, or drink, or whatever they do, they should do all to his glory." But when they lose sight of this duty which they owe to their master, and use his talents for their own purposes, they are wasting his goods, and may expect, either that their riches shall be taken from them, or that they themselves shall be removed by death from a stewardship of which they have shewn themselves so utterly unworthy.

The schemes of the steward to secure a future advantage, points out the wisdom of worldly men, in reference to the things of this world, and is put forward as an example to the people of God, to be equally wise and assiduous in managing the circumstances which occur to them in providence, that they may by them promote and increase their eternal happiness. Have they riches, power, or authority? let them use them for the glory of God, in promoting the spiritual and temporal welfare of men, relieving the poor, supporting the weak, or delivering the oppressed. Have they knowledge, abilities, time, or any

her opportunities of usefulness? let them exercise them so daily, and to the utmost of their power, for the good souls and the glory of God; that when at last they have leave what remains of their master's goods upon earth, they may find, that they have, by his grace, a treasure hid up in heaven, which shall neither waste nor cloy.

LESSONS.

From this section we learn,

- That as we are but the stewards of God's bounty, we ought to be faithful in using all our blessings and talents with a single eye to his glory, ver. 1.
- That every adverse circumstance in providence, every temporal loss, or fear of poverty, should be considered by us as a call from God to examine our accounts as his stewards, and to put us in mind that our stewardship in life must soon come to a close, ver. 1.
- That God will at last call us to an account for the way in which we have used the blessings and bounties committed to our care.—The time of accounting may be long delayed, but it will come at last, ver. 2.
- That our secret sins will assuredly find us out.—We may now sport ourselves with sin, and heedlessly and secretly roll it as a sweet morsel under our tongue; but the time will come, when it shall be exposed, and will force us, with the unjust steward, to cry out, “What shall I do?” ver. 3.
- That the case of worldly men, even by their own confession, will at last be a miserable one.—Those things on which they set all their affections must be taken from them, and will leave them wretched and miserable for ever, ver. 3.
- That pride, if cherished in the heart, will frequently obstruct, if not prevent, the full effect of conviction.—Though the sinner becomes convinced that he cannot “dig,” or gain heaven by his own works, yet, in the haughtiness of his heart, it may be long before he can bring himself to “beg” it from God, as an undeserved favour, ver. 3.

That timely consideration of, and preparation for, the close of our stewardship, is the duty of all.—Let us instantly and diligently look into the state of our accounts with God, and as promptly “resolve what to do,” while there is yet time, and before the stewardship is finally taken from us, ver. 4.

That the diligence and attention of worldly men in temporal matters, ought to stimulate Christians, to similar attention in their preparation for heaven, ver. 8.

That the wisdom of the Christian will be seen by his turning all his worldly means, privileges, and talents, into the current of eternity, ver. 9.

That diligence in the duties attached to poverty, or those arising from the privations of life, is as necessary, as it is in a state of greater elevation of rank, or more extended influence.—They who neglect the prescribed duties of the one situation, we are here assured, would also neglect the duties of the other, ver. 10.

That the neglect of the common secular duties of life, is one great cause of preventing sinners from receiving the gospel, or beginning a course of reformation and piety, ver. 11.

That they who continue to neglect, or abuse the temporal good things which God has entrusted to them in this world, shall never receive from him the better and enduring inheritance which he has laid up for the eternal consolation of his people in heaven, ver. 12.

That they who would serve God, must renounce the service of sin, the love of the world, and an undue regard to the opinions and approbation of men.—If we are faithful servants to God, no other usurper will be allowed to interfere in the empire of our heart, or our obedience to his will, as made known in his word, ver. 13.

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SECTION XXXIII.

The Rich Man and the Beggar.—Luke xvi.
19—31.

NARRATIVE.

THE covetous Pharisees hearing our Lord affirm that they could not serve God and mammon, derided him. But our Lord sharply rebuked them, and solemnly warned them of the danger of all those who placed their affections on the things of time, and sought their good things principally in this world. This he did by delivering the following parable of the Rich Man and the Beggar.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 19. In what was this rich man clothed? How did he fare? How often did he fare sumptuously?—20. What was LAZARUS? Where was he laid? *What was he full of?*—21. What did this beggar desire? What did he desire to be fed with? What did the dogs do? Whose sores did the dogs lick?—22. *What became of the beggar?* Where was his soul carried? By whom was his soul carried to heaven? *What became of the rich man?* What was done to his body after he died?—23. Where did he lift up his eyes? In what condition was he? Whom did he see? Where did he see Abraham? Who was in Abraham's bosom?—24. To whom did this man cry? What did he call Abraham? Whom did he desire Abraham to send? What did he wish cooled? With what did he wish his tongue cooled? How much water did he desire to cool his tongue? Why did he wish this water?—25. What had he received in his lifetime? Who said he had received his good things in this world? What did Abraham say Lazarus had received? What did he say of Lazarus now? What was the rich man's case?—26. What does Abraham say was fixed? Where is this gulf fixed? What did this gulf prevent those who are in heaven from doing? What did it prevent others

who were in hell from doing?—27. Whither did he wish Abraham to send? *Whom did he desire him to send?*—28. How many brethren had he in his father's house? To whom was Lazarus to testify? What did he wish to prevent?—29. What did Abraham say they had? What should they do with Moses and the prophets?—30. What did the rich man suppose would have greater effect upon his brethren? What did he suppose they would do if one went to them from the dead?—31. Who would not be persuaded? By what would they not be persuaded? What is more likely to persuade sinners to repent than one rising from the dead? If they believe not Moses and the prophets, what does Abraham say sinners will not be?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 19. *Clothed in purple and fine linen*, Ver., gaudily and expensively dressed.—*Fared sumptuously*, Did eat and drink of the most delicate and expensive food.

20. *Full of sores*, His skin and flesh broken, and emitting matter, caused by some loathsome disease.

21. *Crumbs*, Broken pieces of bread.—*Licked his sores*, His limbs being exposed for want of clothing, the dogs had an opportunity with their tongues of removing the matter which oozed from his wounds.

22. *Abraham's bosom*, A term used by the Jews to signify heaven.

23. *Lazarus in his bosom*, Lazarus surrounded with the happiness and glory of heaven, in the company of Abraham and the saints.

26. *Gulf*, A bottomless and impassable deep.

28. *Testify*, Bear witness of what I endure, for my neglect of religion and the duties of life while on earth.

29. *Moses and the prophets*, The word of God, or the Bible, which cannot lie, and which is a sufficient testimony of the faithfulness of God in punishing the wicked.

30. *From the dead*, Rose up from the grave, or came again from the world of spirits.

31. *Persuaded*, Convinced by argument, and prevailed on to believe the truth, or to forsake their sin.

ILLUSTRATION OF THE SYMBOLS.

The rich man in this parable represents those who place all their affections on, and seek all their enjoyments from, the things of time : Who, though they are not chargeable with gross wickedness or crime, are yet living without God, and indifferent and careless of his will or his commands. Such have no desire for spiritual enjoyments, or communion with God. Having all to lose in this world, and nothing to hope for in the world to come, they are insensibly led, first to doubt, and then to deny the just retributions of God for sin in another world, and thus to live as if there was no hereafter. How dreadful must the case of such be ! when, at the moment of death they are compelled to shut their eyes to all their darling enjoyments in life, and must open them in the torments of hell, without the most distant hope of amelioration or change !

The beggar is intended to shew the great superiority of spiritual riches to all the luxuries and enjoyments of life. A man may be houseless, hungry, naked, and diseased, and yet be happy, the friend of God, and ministered unto by angels. His sufferings here are but short, and his consolations while enduring them are both great and many. And when death approaches, his arrival is welcomed. He drops his distempered body, and all the ills that adhere to sinful mortality, and ascends under the guidance of angels, to the everlasting mansions prepared for him by his Father in glory. The evils which he endured in life, aided him in his ascent from the world : Like a cloud wafting his soul to heaven, though they obscured for a moment the sun of his happiness, gave place to a cloudless sky and an eternal day. But the good things of the rich man chained him to the earth. Captivated by the vanities of time, he refused to look on their worthlessness, or to remember their end. Forgetting God, and heaven, and eternity, he continued to cling to the world, till his day closed, and his sun went down, leaving him in darkness and everlasting night.

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn,

That men ought to beware of priding themselves in riches. If these are made the chief good of the they cease to be a blessing, and are converted to curse, ver. 19.

That outward circumstances are not to be judged tokens of God's love, or God's displeasure.—His enemies may "flourish like the green bay tree;" his own people may, for wise reasons, be "deeply afflicted, tormented," ver. 19, 20.

That no situation in life is so wretched and mis- as to prevent God from taking up his abode with people. He measures not the size of their halls, nor regards the fineness of their dress; but delights to dwell with the humble and the contrite in heart, the houseless and homeless, and in the eye of men wretched and miserable, ver. 20.

That true religion, and the hope of everlasting life, must not raise us above that station in which God has placed us. The saint who was soon to ascend to his seat in glory, yet, while on earth, contentedly ate of the crumbs from the table of the ungodly, who ceased to do so, ver. 21.

That death is a messenger of peace to the righteous; it arrests at once the full current of inquietudes, it ceases to harass the soul, removes every uncom- fortable and painful circumstance, and opens the avenue to peace, and comfort, and everlasting joy, ver. 22.

That the pomp of the ungodly rich should lead to serious reflection on the delusions and vanity of earthly things. Decorate the perishing body as we will, either living or dead, if the soul is in danger, it is but a senseless mockery, ver. 22.

That though men may continue to shut their eyes to the danger of their state, yet this does not make their situation the more safe, or their destruction less certain. The time must come when their eyes will

opened to the truth of God's word here, or to the reality of his indignation in hell hereafter, ver. 23.

That the riches, and pleasures, and honours of this life, have no power to mitigate or remove the pains of the unseen world. Narrow as is the space which divides time from eternity, there is yet no passage there for those things in which the wicked have centered all their hope, ver. 23.

That the torments of hell will be increased by the happiness of the saints, and the knowledge of those being in heaven, who were once their neighbours, or with whom they were acquainted while upon earth, ver. 23.

That the pains of the ungodly in another world, are inconceivable and eternal. "Their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched," ver. 24.

That even parents will at last have to acquiesce in the just punishment of their ungodly children. Abraham acknowledged the rich man to have been a son after the flesh, but having continued and died an enemy to God, the bonds of affection are now for ever broken, ver. 25.

That the troubles and afflictions of life, will render the happiness of heaven more exquisite and delightful to the people of God; while the prosperity and sinful indulgences of the wicked, will render their situation hereafter more intolerable, ver. 25.

That the pains of hell and the happiness of heaven, can never be the lot of the same individual. He that is in heaven, is there for ever; and they who are once in hell, are within the gulf which is never to be passed, ver. 26.

That any example, enticement, or persuasion on the part of sinners, which shall induce others to commit sin, shall tend greatly to aggravate their pains and sufferings in the world of spirits, ver. 28.

That as the truths of the bible are appointed by God to be the great means of man's salvation, it ought to be our most urgent desire to become better acquainted with its truths, and to believe and obey its doctrines and duties, ver. 29.

That the heart of man is very deceitful. Sinners deceive themselves by thinking, that if they were in a better situation, or enjoyed some other privilege than they do at present, then they would repent, and obey the gospel; not understanding, that those who resist the plain and demonstrative evidence of the bible, "would not believe though one should rise from the dead," ver. 30, 31.

SECTION XXXIV

Ten Lepers Cured.—Luke xvii. 11.

NARRATIVE.

AFTER delivering the parable of the Rich Man and the Beggar, our Lord instructed the disciples to avoid being the cause of others committing sin (Luke xvii. 1—10.) and about the same time, resolved to go into Judea to Lazarus who was sick, (John 11:1—44.) On his way he met ten men, who were lepers, and desired to go and shew themselves to the prophet. On their way, they found themselves healed; and when they returned, they were overcome with gratitude at the kindness of Christ, and returned back to give him thanks for their healing.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 11. Where was Jesus going? What did he pass through? What part of Samaria did he pass through?—12. How many men did he meet? Where did they stand?—13. Where did they meet him? What was their request?—14. How many of these men? Where did they stand?—15. How many of them lifted up? To whom did they speak? What did they call him? *What did they ask him to do?*—16. Who saw them? What did he bid them do?—17. How many turned back?—18. What made him turn back? Whom did he see?—19. When he turned back?—20. At whose feet did he fall?—21. On what is it said he fell? What did he give them?

at countryman was this man?—17. Who answered this? *How many did he say had been cleansed?* But whom did he ask?—18. What had the nine not done? Who had done this?—19. Who bade him arise? What else did he bid him do? What had his faith done?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 12. *Village*, A little town, or a collection of houses in the country.—*Lepers*, Men troubled with a noisome disease called leprosy, which being infectious, prevented them from approaching those who were clean.

13. *Lifted up their voices*, Cried aloud with earnestness.

14. *Cleansed*, Healed of their disease.

15. *Glorified God*, Gave God thanks for the cure which had been so miraculously accomplished.

16. *A Samaritan*, A native of Samaria, who were in general idolaters, and at enmity with the Jews.

LESSONS.

From this section we learn,

that we ought mutually to associate, and support each other in times of trouble or distress, thus endeavouring to remove or to mitigate the severity of our afflictions, ver. 12.

that in every public, or general calamity, we ought ourselves to apply to Christ for relief, and induce our companions in trouble also to accompany us in our petitions, ver. 13.

that many are found crying to Christ for mercy in the time of distress, who forget and forsake him as soon as he grants them relief, ver. 13.

that as God's manner of dealing with sinners is often mysterious, and beyond the comprehension of those whom he is about to relieve, it should be our study simply to follow in the path he has prescribed to us in his word, and leave the result of every providence wholly to his wisdom and goodness, ver. 14.

That sinners are not to expect that their sin be forgiven, and their souls washed from the filthiness, but by those means which God himself has appointed, ver. 14.

That a sense of help and forgiveness should move earnestly to inquire after and follow him, and should stimulate us to shew our gratitude to his glory, ver. 15.

That while the ungrateful recipients of God's goodness get no more than the outward mercy; they should be humble and grateful for his goodness, receive the spiritual blessing, ver. 15.

That true faith is always accompanied by thanksgiving.—When we really believe that we are in the danger of death, but are now by the grace of God, made the heirs of glory, and are wondering gratitude must necessarily follow, ver. 16.

That the ingratitude of so many at the mercy of the continued goodness of God, should excite us to thanksgiving over our own spirits, lest we also, in this time of our life, take of their sin, ver. 17.

That they who enjoy the most favourable opportunity of improvement, are not always most benefited by it.—The faith of this poor idolatrous Samaritan found to outstrip that of his more favoured brethren, who seem to have been Jews, ver. 18.

That the way to procure a supply of new blessings from God, is diligently to improve, and constantly to renew our gratitude for those we have formerly received.—“To him that hath, more shall be given.”

That as faith is the grand instrument of justification, we ought to pray that God would in his Word give the illumination of his Spirit, and strengthen us daily to exercise it in our journey through life, ver. 19.

SECTION XXXV.

Lazarus Raised from the Grave.

John xi. 30—46.

NARRATIVE.

WHEN Jesus arrived at Bethany, after curing the ten lepers, he found that Lazarus was dead, and been buried four days. He, however, coming to grave with the sister and friends of Lazarus, ordered them to remove the stone from the cave where he was buried, and ordered him to come forth. This command was accompanied with power, and Lazarus revived and came forth alive. This caused the Pharisees to call a council for the purpose of putting him to death, preventing the people from acknowledging him to be the Messiah; which caused our Lord to retire to a place called Ephraim, where he remained for some time with his disciples. (John xi. 1—57.)

EXERCISE.

ver. 30. Who was not yet come into the town? Who met him? Where was Jesus at this time?—31. Who rose up hastily? Who were with her? Where were these Jews and Mary? What did Mary do? Who loved her? Where did they think she was going? What did they suppose she intended to do at the grave?—32. Who saw Jesus? When did she see him? What did she do when she saw him? What would his being there have prevented?—33. Who was troubled? What did he do in spirit? What troubled him, and made him weep in spirit?—34. What did Jesus ask? What did he bid Jesus do?—35. Who wept?—36. Whom did the Jews say he loved?—37. What did the Jews say he had done? What did they say he could have prevented?—38. Where did Jesus come? In what state did he come to the grave? What kind of grave was this? What lay upon it?—39. What did Jesus bid them take

away? *Who spoke of the body being putrified?* Who was Martha? What made her think the body would be putrified?—40. What had Jesus before this, said she would see? On what condition was she to see the glory of God?—41. What did they do with the stone? From whence did they take it away? What did Jesus do? To whom did he pray? For what did he thank God?—42. What did he know? For whose sake had he spoken? What did he wish them to believe?—43. To whom did Jesus cry? When did he cry? What did he cry?—44. *Who came forth?* What was bound? With what was he bound? In what state was his face? What did Jesus bid them do?—45. Who believed on him? What Jews believed on him? What made them believe on him?—46. Where did some of the other Pharisees go? What did they tell them?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 33. *Groaned in spirit*, Was greatly affected by the grief which he saw around him; and the hardness of heart which was exhibited by some of the Jews.

38. *Cave*, An apartment hewn out of the rock, or dug in the earth.

39. *Stinketh*, Is corrupted, and emits a nauseous smell in consequence.

LESSONS.

From this section we learn,

That a feeling sense of the absence of Christ, will excite his people to realize his presence in every ordinance and dispensation of his providence, ver. 31.

That no company should keep us from meeting with Christ, whether in his ordinances, or at a throne of grace, ver. 31.

That we ought to sympathize with our neighbours and friends in their affliction, "weeping with those who weep, and rejoicing with those who rejoice," ver. 31.

That we are very imperfect judges of the wisdom of God's dealings with his people. That which we think might and should have been prevented, will at last be found to have been the surest and readiest way of promoting God's glory and our own best interests ver. 32.

That we must never set bounds to God's goodness or power, or suppose, that his delay to deliver his people, is the effect of neglect, and not of wisdom. Lazarus died, not because Christ had not power to heal him while at a distance, but to shew still greater power, in raising him from the dead, ver. 32.

That we ought sincerely to sympathize with others in their afflictions; sharing in their griefs, and endeavouring, as we have opportunity, to lighten or remove them, ver. 33.

That an inquiry into the circumstances of those whom we intend to benefit, is a proper prelude to our deeds of beneficence. Our enquiries, and their answers, will tend still more to soften our hearts to pity, and excite theirs to gratitude, ver. 34.

That the people of God should be affected by the trials of others, as well as by their own sufferings.—Jesus, who endured the heaviest afflictions without a murmur, wept for the sorrows of Martha and Mary, ver. 35.

That our love to one another, ought not only to be sincere, but also open and candid.—In this duty of love to the brethren in particular, our "light should be made so to shine before men," that all may take knowledge of us that "we have been with Jesus," and be made to say with the Jews here, "Behold how he loved them," ver. 36.

That former experience of Christ's power and goodness, should encourage us to hope for them being again exerted in our favour when necessary, in the time to come, ver. 37.

That hardness of heart, and unbelief in sinners, are greater causes of grief and affliction to the people of God, than any temporal calamity which can befall them, ver. 38.

That we are not presumptuously to trust in God for doing us good, while we neglect the means he has appointed.—Lazarus will be raised, but men must remove the stone, ver. 39.

That as unbelief is always rearing up excuses for the neglect of commanded duty, and thus preventing the

free course and operations of the gospel, we ought simply to do what Christ has commanded us, in the confident hope of seeing "the glory of God," ver. 34.

That if we would have Christ do for us, or for our what we cannot do for ourselves, we must diligently attend to, and perform those things which he has commanded, and which he has put in our power.—The Jews could not give Lazarus life, but they could take away the stone, ver. 41.

That the performance of every duty should be accompanied by prayer and thanksgiving, after the example of our Lord, ver. 41.

That the intercession of Christ is always effectual, ver. 42.

That all the wonders of Christ's life, and all the dispensations of God's special providence towards us, should be used by us for the strengthening of our faith, ver. 42.

That it is the duty of those who are commissioned to speak to sinners, to follow the example of Christ, as to command attention, and exhort sinners to return to God, though they are at the time dead in their passes and sins.—He who has given them the commission to speak, can accompany their word with power, and cause even the dead to live, ver. 43.

That when God by his power and spirit gives life to the sinner, he commands the use of means for the perfecting of the work.—It is God alone who can give life to the soul; but his servants on earth, by their instructions and exhortations, must endeavour to awaken the conscience, and teach sinners their duties, ver. 44.

That the power of Christ, exhibited in the conversion of sinners, should increase our love, and strengthen our faith, ver. 45.

That the grace and blessing of God are necessary for the conversion of sinners.—The power displayed in the resurrection of Lazarus, while it was the means of converting some, increased the enmity and opposition of others, ver. 46.

SECTION XXXVI.

Labourers hired at different Hours.

Matt. xx. 1—16.

NARRATIVE.

WHILE residing at Ephraim, the Pharisees asked our Lord concerning the kingdom of God, when he retold the destruction of Jerusalem, and his own sufferings, (Luke xvii. 20—37) delivered the parable of the importunate widow, (Luke xviii. 1—8.) and the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, (Luke xviii. 9—11.) and sometime afterwards, gave his opinion concerning divorce, (Matth. xix. 3—12. Mark x. 2—12.) On seeing children being brought to him, he blessed them, (Matth. xix. 13—15. Mark x. 13—16. Luke xviii. 15—16.) and on leaving Ephraim on his way to Jerusalem, delivered a discourse on self-denial, after an interview with a ruler, who asked what he should do to inherit eternal life, (Matth. xix. 16—30. Mark x. 17—31. Luke xix. 12—30.) He at the same time delivered the parable of the labourers hired at different hours, which is the subject of the present section.

EXERCISE.

Exercise 1. What did our Lord compare to an household-
holder?—*When did this householder first go out? For what purpose did he go out?—2. With whom did he go? For what wages did he agree with them? Where did he send them?—3. At what hour did he go the second time? What did he see? Where were they standing? What were they doing while standing in the market place?—4. Where did he bid them go? At what time did he say he would give them? What did they say?—5. At what other hours did he go out? What did he do at these hours?—6. At what hour did he go for the last time? What did he then find? What*

did he ask them?—7. What was their reason for standing idle? Where did he bid them go? What were they to receive?—8. Who was to give them their hire? Who desired the steward to give them their hire: At what time did he give this order? With whom was the steward to begin? With whom was he to end?—9. *What was given to them who were hired at the eleventh hour?*—10. *What did those who were hired in the morning receive?* What did they think they should have received?—11. What did they do when they received it? Against whom did they murmur?—12. Who had been made equal to them? How long did they say the last had wrought? What had they themselves borne?—13. Who answered to this? *What did the master call him?* What had he not done? For what did he say they had agreed?—14. What did he bid him take? Where was he to go? What did the master say he would do?—15. What did he say was lawful for him to do? What did he suppose made the man's eye evil?—16. Who does our Lord say shall be first? Who shall be last? Who are called? How many are chosen?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 1. *Householder*, A person who keeps an establishment of servants, labourers, and others, for necessary purposes.—*Hire labourers into his vineyard*, Engage persons for a certain sum, to labour in his garden or vineyard.

2. *Penny*, A denarius or Roman penny, was sevenpence halfpenny sterling.

3. *Third hour*, Nine o'clock in the morning.

4. *Whatsoever is right*, The proportion of wages for the time you labour.

5. *Sixth and ninth hours*, Twelve o'clock noon, and three o'clock afternoon.

6. *Eleventh hour*, Five o'clock in the afternoon, about one hour before sun set, or six o'clock, when labourers in general quitted their work for the day.

8. *Even*, Evening, the time when their labour was over for the day.—*Steward*, He who took charge of his affairs, and paid and received his money.

11. *Murmured*, Began secretly to complain among themselves.—*Good-man of the house*, The master of the use who had hired them.

12. *Borne the burden and heat of the day*, Laboured in morning till night, not only in the cool of the morning; and evening when labour is easiest, but during the day heat, when labour in the fields is almost intolerable.

14. *Take that thine is*, Take that which belongs to thee.

15. *Is thine eye evil*, Are you envious and displeased seeing the good bestowed upon others, though it is at your expence.

ILLUSTRATION OF THE SYMBOLS.

The *vineyard* in this parable, means the church of Christ, and *labouring in it*, means a performance of various duties towards God, and towards men. The *several hours*, means different periods of time or of life; childhood, youth, manhood, and old age. The *graces*, means the blessings and promises of the gospel, which are bestowed by God as he sees fit, not with regard to former character so much, as to the activity of grace, faith, and love of those who receive it.

The intention of our Lord in delivering this parable to the Jews, seems to have been, to shew them the equity and justice of his dealings with the Pharisees and the Jews, in communicating the privileges of the Gospel to publicans, sinners, and Gentiles. The self-righteous Pharisees, and the Jewish nation in general, were nominally engaged as labourers in the vineyard of God, received all, and more than they could claim from him as their Master; and therefore, they had no right to challenge him for making others partakers of the like grace with themselves; nay, in the close of the parable, intimates, that while the Jews cast from them the blessings thus offered to them by God, the Gentiles, and even sinners whom they pretended to despise, would receive, and enjoy them, while they themselves would be cast out.

In a more general sense, however, the parable conveys to all Christians an important lesson, and points out the freeness of gospel privileges and blessings to all who sincerely repent and turn unto God. They who have been called to the belief of the truth in early life in the morning of their days, shall have all that God has promised, nay infinitely "more than they can either ask or think;" while others, called at a later period of life, though they have not "borne the burden and heat of the day," nay, though they have been called in the old age, at the eleventh hour, will likewise receive "more than they can either ask or think," even eternal life.

We are not to suppose, that the people of God will murmur at his dealing thus graciously with sinners at every age; but our Lord here intends to shew us, the hypocrites, and mere nominal Christians, who are but unprofitable labourers in his service, who might, and will frequently do, murmur against the freedom of gospel grace to all who sincerely seek it, are quite inexcusable. "After *they* have done all," even according to their own opinion of their doings, "they are but unprofitable servants;" and have no claim upon God, far less have they any right to challenge him for doing what he will with his own, in communicating his blessings to others.

LESSONS.

From this section we learn,

That God is anxious for the salvation of all; calling by his servants, his word, his ordinances, and the circumstances of his providence, even at the earliest period of our lives, ver. 1.

That though all men are by nature sinners, rebels against God, and servants to another master; yet he is pleased to call them to himself, reconcile them to his character, promise them wages and reward, and send them into his vineyard to labour, in their several stations, in the great cause of the gospel of peace, ver.

That as childhood is the natural and best time of our lives to begin our labours for God and eternity, we ought as ministers, parents, or teachers, early to invite and encourage children to come and labour in the vineyard of God, ver. 1.

That as God has been pleased to offer us a reward for our labours in his service, though he has an undoubted right to them all ; we shall be without excuse, if we are found neglecting a service that is not only our duty, but our privilege, ver. 2.

That idleness in the cause of God, is a state of rebellion against his authority. It is not they only who are swearers and Sabbath-breakers, and disobedient to parents, who shall be condemned, but they who neglect to use their opportunities of usefulness, and to improve their talents in the service of God, ver. 3.

That whenever we receive a call to duty, it is dangerous to refuse, or to delay complying with it. " To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts," ver. 4, 5.

That no age or condition is beyond the reach of divine grace.—They who have delayed till the eleventh hour, are still invited and made welcome to the free grace offered in the gospel, ver. 6, 7.

That there is more hope of those who have lived long without the means of grace and the calls of the gospel, and who have accordingly never been asked to hire in the service of Christ, than there is of those who have long resisted every invitation, and have arrived at the eleventh hour, without obeying it, ver. 7.

That at whatever period of life the Lord's people enter upon his service, whether in youth, manhood, or old age, they will then seek and serve no other master till the close of their day, when they shall be called to receive their promised reward, ver. 8.

That the full reward of the Christian is not to be expected in this world.—It is not till the day of labour and of life has closed, and the evening of death has arrived, that the people of God will be admitted to their glorious inheritance, ver. 8.

That God is a bountiful master.—He deals not with men according to strict justice, but according to the multitude of his mercies in Jesus Christ, ver. 9.

That covetous desires, and unreasonable expectations, are the causes of much pain and uneasiness to those who indulge them, and frequently lead to uncharitable thoughts of, and improper conduct to others, ver. 10, 11.

That a self-righteous spirit, and too high an opinion of our own doings, are derogatory to the honour of God, and of a right and charitable frame of spirit towards others, ver. 12.

That God is the sovereign disposer of his own bounty.—He giveth unto all men liberally; and no one has a right to complain, because he deals out his bounties to others, more liberally than he does to them, ver. 13, 14.

That the example in others of kindness and charity towards our fellow-men, should stimulate us to imitate them, and not seek to detract from the goodness of others as an excuse for our own neglects, ver. 15.

That they who are most favoured in providence by enjoying spiritual privileges, are not always most benefited by them.—Those who in this respect have been last, will, by their attention and diligence be found at last to be first, ver. 16.

That God is sovereign in his dealings with sinners.—He calls all, but permits many to resist his grace and quench his Spirit, ver. 16.

SECTION XXXVII

Blind Beggar cured near Jericho Mark x. 46—52.

See also Mat. xx. 29—34. and Luke xviii. 35—43.

NARRATIVE

AFTER delivering the parable of the Labourers, while on his way to Jerusalem, our Lord again retold his suffering and resurrection, and inculcated humility on his followers, (Math. xx. 17—28. Mark x. 2—16. Luke xviii. 31—34.) Coming to Jericho, he met two blind men who were sitting by the way-side begging; one in particular, named Bartimeus, was well known in the place, and who, after receiving sight, followed Jesus in his journey.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 46. To what city did our Lord and his disciples come? Who went with them when they left Jericho? Whom did they find by the way-side? Whose son was Bartimeus? Where did they find Bartimeus? What was he doing by the way-side?—47. What did he hear? What did he do when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth? To whom did he cry? *What did he call him?* What did he ask? On whom did he wish Jesus to have mercy?—48. Who charged him? What did they charge him? Who was to hold his peace? *What effect had his charge on him?* Who cried the more? What made him cry the more? What did he cry?—49. What did Jesus do? Who stood still? What did he command? Who called the blind man? Who commanded them to call the blind man? What did they say to the blind man? What did they desire him to do? What did they bid him do? Why did they bid him rise? Who did they say had called the blind man?—50. What did he cast away? Who cast away his gar-

ment ? What did he do when he cast away his garment ? To whom did he come ?—51. Who spoke to him ? What did Jesus ask at him ? Who returned an answer to this ? What did the blind man call Jesus ? What did he wish to receive ?—52. *What did Jesus bid him do ?* Who bade him go away ? *What had made him whole ?* What did he receive ? When did he receive his sight ? Who received his sight ? What did he do when he received his sight ? Whom did he follow ? Whither did he follow Jesus ?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 46. *Jericho*, A city of the Benjamites, about 19 miles east from Jerusalem.—*Disciples*, Scholars, or followers.—*Highway-side*, The side of one of the principal roads leading into the city.

47. *Son of David*, A descendant of King David ; a name given by the Jews to their expected Messiah.

48. *Charged him*, Commanded, or intreated him.—*Hold his peace*, Be silent.

49. *Be of good comfort*, Be glad, take courage.

50. *Garment*, Part of his clothes, the upper part of his dress in which he had been wrapped.

52. *Thy faith hath made thee whole*, His belief in Jesus Christ as the Messiah, was the reason why he was cured.

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn,

That where Christ is found, we should follow.—That spot is no longer to be desired which he and his people forsake ver. 46.

That we ought to be watchful over our own hearts, lest we be only following Christ with the multitude.—Such may be found crying “Hosanna” to him to-day, who will not hesitate to join in crying “crucify him” to-morrow, ver. 46.

That eye-sight should be prized and improved.—While we can read the Word of God for ourselves, let us become acquainted with the Son of David, lest others,

who are less highly favoured than we are, should put us to shame, ver. 46.

at when we find ourselves in providence deprived of the privilege, we ought to be more diligent in improving what we possess.—This man could not see Jesus, but he gladly heard of him, ver. 47.

at present opportunities must be eagerly laid hold of and improved.—Jesus is now passing by in his ordinances ; if we allow him to depart without a cure, we may be left in the darkness of ignorance and sin for ever, ver. 47.

at the foundation of prayer rests in a sense of our own need, and of Christ's ability.—If we feel our wants, and know his power and goodness, prayer will be the consequence, ver. 47.

at though unconverted sinners may not be able to see all the beauties of Christ, and the blessings of salvation ; yet, if they will but be convinced of their own danger and inability, and desire relief, they may, like this blind man, “ feel after him,” and cry for and find mercy, in the use of such means as are within their power, ver. 47.

at mercy,—pure,—undeserved mercy,—is the only plea of the sinner.—We have nothing, and deserve nothing ; but *mercy* is the offer of the gospel, ver. 47.

at our taking offence at, or treating with harshness, the anxiety of others for the welfare of their souls, is a sure sign of ignorance of, and carelessness about, our own spiritual condition, ver. 48.

at discouragements, opposition, or even threatenings from men, should stir us up to greater activity, and more earnestness in securing the salvation of our souls.—Yielding to opposition or clamour *now*, may be followed by ruin *for ever*, ver. 48.

at the persevering cry of the awakened sinner will not be made in vain.—Christ may seem at first to pass on, but he will at least hear, and stop for their comfort and healing, ver. 49. 7

at as sinners are brought to Christ generally by the instrumentality of his servants, we should embrace

every opportunity of making known his invitation and inviting sinners to take the benefit of it, ver.

That the calls and invitations of the gospel are car of comfort and joy to every sinner. The gospel, doubt lays open and exposes the wounds of sin in heart of a sinner, but it at the same time pours the wine and oil of consolation and forgiveness, thus binds up the heart which was previously broken, ver. 49.

That an application of the comforts of the gospel is always be accompanied with exhortations to diligence in the use of means.—We are not only to say “b good comfort,” but we are to exhort the sinner “rise,” and exert himself, when his Lord calls him, ver. 49.

That every impediment in our way to God and to holiness, should be anxiously and instantly removed of our way.—The garment that would have prevented his rising, or running to Christ, is laid hold of by to be removed and cast from him, ver. 50.

That temporal comforts, and even common necessities are not to be allowed so to occupy our attention as prevent our exertions for the soul and eternity.—The garment,—the only garment,—is to be left or away, rather than we should neglect the opportunity of a cure, ver. 50.

That the mere forsaking of the world, and casting away its vanities, is not all that is necessary in the Christian's life.—He must not only cast away his garments but he must exert himself, and “rise” to newness of life. A activity and diligence in his Christian warfare, ver. 50.

That we ought frequently to contemplate our own weakness that we may be quickened in prayer, and know when to request, when our Lord condescends to ask, “Wilt thou that I should do unto you?” ver. 51.

That the removal of spiritual blindness, and a capacity to see and admire the glory of Christ, should be constant and earnest desire of all Christ's people, 51.

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That faith is the channel by which all our blessings are received from the gospel fountain.—According to our faith, so does it fare with us, ver. 52.

That Scriptural knowledge, and the illumination^r of the Spirit, will always lead the sincere soul after Christ in the path of duty and holiness. He received his sight, and then he “followed Jesus in the way,” ver. 52.

SECTION XXXVIII.

*Christ's Public Entry into Jerusalem.—Matt.
xxi. 1—16.*

See also Mark xi. 1. and Luke xix. 29.

NARRATIVE.

AFTER curing the blind beggar, Jesus had an interview with Zaccheus, the publican, with whom he lodged, (Luke xix. 1—10.) and where he delivered the parable of the nobleman's servants. He then proceeded on his journey to Jerusalem, where he was now about to suffer. On his journey he came to Bethany, and lodged in the house of Lazarus, where he was anointed by Mary, (John xi. 55—57. xii. 1—14.) and afterwards he made his public entry into Jerusalem, with the people shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” and acknowledging him as the Messiah promised to their fathers.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 1. To what did our Lord and his disciples draw nigh? To what mount did they come? What town was there? Whom did Jesus send? How many disciples did he send?—**2.** *Where were the two disciples to go?* Where was the village to which they were to go? *What were they to find?* In what condition was the ass to be found? What were they to find with her? What were they to loose? Where were they to take them? To whom?

were they to be brought?—3. What were they to say? To whom were they to say this? Who were they to say had need of them? What were the people to do on their saying this?—4. Why was all this done? What was done? Who spoke this?—5. Whose king was to come? To whom was this king to come? What was to be his character? Upon what was he to sit?—Who was set upon the ass and the colt?—6. Who went? What did they do? Who had given them commandment?—7. What did they bring? Who brought the ass and the colt? What did they put on them? Upon what did they put their clothes? Who sat upon the ass?—8. *What were spread in the way? Who spread their garments?* Where did they spread their garments? What were cut down? Who cut down the branches? From what did they cut down the branches? What did they do with the branches? Where were the branches spread?—9. Who cried? Where were the multitudes that cried? To whom did they proclaim hosanna? Who did they say was blessed? In whose name did he come?—10. What was moved? Of what city were the people who were moved? When were the people of Jerusalem moved? Who was come into Jerusalem? What did the people of Jerusalem say?—11. Who answered the enquiry of the people of Jerusalem? Who did they say this was? What did they say Jesus was? Of what town did they say Jesus was? In what country was Nazareth?—12. Where did Jesus go? Into whose temple did Jesus go? Whom did he cast out? Where did the people buy and sell? What did he do to the tables? Whose tables did he overthrow? What did he do to the seats? Whose seats did he overthrow? What did these people sell?—13. What was God's house to be called? What had they made God's house?—14. Who came to him? Where did the blind and the lame come? To whom did the blind and the lame come? What did Jesus do to them?—Whom did Jesus heal?—15. Who saw the wonderful things which Jesus did? *Whom did they see crying in the temple? What were the children saying? To whom were they crying hosanna? Who were*

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were displeased? At what were the chief Priests and Scribes displeased?—16. To whom did they speak? What did they ask? Who answered them? Out of whose mouths does God perfect praise?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 1. *Drew nigh*, Came near.—*Bethphage*, A small village about two miles east of Jerusalem.—*Mount of Olives*, A mountain, a little way east of Jerusalem.

2. *Village over against you*, The small town, or hamlet, opposite to where you now are.—*Straightway*, Immediately, at the same time.—*Colt*, A young ass.

4. *Fulfilled*, Accomplished, brought to pass.

5. *Daughter of Zion*, The Jews, the true worshippers of God.—*Behold*, Take notice.—*Meek*, Gentle and mild.—*Fool*, The young of any beast of burden.

8. *Multitude*, Number of people assembled together.—*Garments*, Clothes.—*Strawed*, Scattered, or spread them down on the road.

9. *Hosanna*, An exclamation of praise, meaning, "Save, we beseech thee."

10. *Was moved*, Was in great commotion and wonder.

11. *Nazareth*, The town where Jesus was brought up.—*Galilee*, The district of country in which Nazareth was situated.

12. *Overthrow*, Upset, or overturned them.—*Money-changers*, They who gave one kind of money for another.

13. *Den of thieves*, A harbour, or place of concealment and security for those who took what was not their own.

14. *Healed them*, Cured them of their troubles and diseases.

15. *Wonderful things*, Things which caused people to be surprised and wonder.—*Displeased*, Not pleased, offended, angry.

16. *Babes and sucklings*, Children of the tenderest years.—*Perfected praise*, Enabled them to praise and adore him in a complete and perfect manner.

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn.

- That we ought at all times, and in every place, to be ready to obey the calls of duty, and the commandments of God.—The fatigues of a journey, or the desire of refreshment or rest, did not prevent the two disciples from going their Lord's message, ver. 1.
- That there is no creature so humble, or so mean, but God can make it serviceable in his church and to his people.—However small our capacity, or limited our opportunities, let us improve them to the extent of our power, and the Lord can and may honour us by a success which we could never have anticipated, ver. 2.
- That no fear of future opposition, or hinderances in duty, should ever deter us from simply and instantly obeying the plain commandments of God.—He is omniscient and omnipotent; and not only knows the heart, but can turn the hearts of all to the accomplishment of his will, ver. 2.
- That caution and charity are always necessary in judging of the conduct of our brethren.—Some might blame the disciples for removing the animals, who knew not that their master, the Maker and Owner of all things, had sent for them, because he "had need of them," ver. 3.
- That God will make a plain way for his people in pursuing the path of their duty.—He knows how they will be opposed, and the way by which they can come off more than conquerors, ver. 3.
- That all that we have is the Lord's property. He is "The Lord," who at first gave, and who has a right to take, whatever he has need of, ver. 3.
- That we should never grudge what is required for the service of Christ.—They are honoured who can serve him; and they who, in a proper spirit, give up anything for his sake, shall receive manifold more even in this life, and in the world to come life everlasting, ver. 3.

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That all that God has said shall be fulfilled.—Let us rejoice with trembling. He has promised, but he has also threatened; we should therefore be on our guard, and watch unto prayer, ver. 4.

That ambition, and avarice, and pride, are the foundation of misery and disgrace.—True dignity was found in Christ; and the glory of his triumph was augmented by his modesty, and meekness, and poverty, ver. 5.

That it is our duty to declare the glory of Christ and his salvation to others.—Let us “*tell* the daughter of Zion” the glories of her King, and the greatness of his love, ver. 5.

That the opinions of men ought not to sway us in the discharge of our duties.—Where Christ directs us, we should go: What he bids, that should be done, ver. 6.

That a simple and ready obedience to the commandments of Christ is the way to get clearer views of his omniscience, omnipotence, and love.—The disciples went, and found it as Christ had said, ver. 6.

That Christ's people should never scruple to deny themselves some of the comforts, or even the necessities of life, for Christ's sake, and the promotion of his glory. The disciples stripped off part of their clothes, and set him upon them, ver. 7.

That when we cannot do for Christ so much as we would wish, we ought to do for him as much as we can.—They who had not garments to spare, shewed their love by procuring branches of trees, ver. 8.

That a great outcry about religion, is no sure sign of godliness, or attachment to the cross of Christ.—While the world applauds, multitudes will join; but when sufferings come, they fall away, ver. 9.

That praise is both the duty and the privilege of Christ's people, ver. 9.

That popularity, and the praise of men, should be but lightly esteemed in comparison with the favour of God.—The opinions of the multitude change like the

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wind ; but the love and approbation of God are sure and lasting, ver. 9.

That the blessedness of Christ's kingdom, and the happiness of his followers, are matters of wonder and surprise to the men of the world, ver. 10.

That the joy and exultation of Christ's people will often induce strangers to make enquiry after him, ver. 10.

That we should never refuse an answer to enquirers about Christ and salvation.—Some may scoff, but others may hear, and turn to the Lord, ver. 11.

That times of prosperity should be times of devotion.—Christ's triumph led him to the temple, ver. 12.

That traders and money-changers are too often found in the church of Christ.—They who think that gain is godliness, and make religion a pretext for promoting their temporal interests, are a dishonour to religion, and a great incumbrance to the temple of God, ver. 12.

That the purification of Christ's church begins especially with the expulsion of selfish professors, ver. 12.

That a principal part of the duties of God's house should consist in prayer.—It is a house of prayer, ver. 13.

That we should keep our hearts when we come into the house of God.—We are too apt to indulge them in thoughts more adapted to a den of thieves than to a house of prayer, ver. 13.

That the spiritually diseased should seek for Christ in his temple.—There he is sometimes found even of them "who seek him not," ver. 14.

That public notice and celebrity do not always ensure the most useful or desirable sphere of action for the servants of Christ.—Their Master in the mountain, or by the sea-side, taught without molestation ; but the movement of a city in his favour, stirred up his enemies, and accelerated his death, ver. 15.

That pride and envy are great enemies to true religion.—The chief Priests and Scribes, instead of joining the multitude in praises to Christ took offence, and plotted his destruction, ver. 15.

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that children should early be trained to celebrate the praises of Christ.—From the mouths of babes and sucklings he perfects praise, ver. 16.

at no age, or station, is beyond the power and influences of the Spirit of God.—The rich and the poor, the young and the old, are all effective instruments in his hand for the perfecting of praise, ver. 16.

SECTION XXXIX.

The Vineyard Let out to Husbandmen.

Matt. xxi. 33—46.

See also Mark xii. 1—12. and Luke xx. 9—19.

NARRATIVE.

OUR Lord having made his public entry into Jerusalem, returned in the evening to Bethany. Next morning the fig-tree was cursed, (Matt. xxi. 17—23. Mark xi. 12—26.) Certain Greeks desired to see Jesus, and, on his praying, a voice was heard from heaven, (John xii. 20—50.) While teaching in the temple, the scribe of the Jews sent to enquire as to his authority; on which occasion he delivered the parable of the two sons sent to work by their father, (Matt. xxi. 23—32. Mark xi. 27—33.—Luke xix. 47, 48; xx. 1—8); and the parable of the Vineyard let out to Husbandmen, which forms the subject of the present Section.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 33. What were the people to hear? Who rented a vineyard? *What did he put round it? What did he dig in it? What did he build in it?* What did he do with the vineyard after this? To whom did he let it? Whither did he go?—**34.** Whom did he send? To whom did he send his servants? When did he send his servants? For what did he send his servants? For what fruits did he send his servants?—**35.** Who

took his servants? Whose servants did they take? What did they do to the first? What did they do to the second? What did they do to the third?—36. Who sent other servants? How many did he now send? What did the husbandmen do to them?—37. Whom did he send last? What did he say they would do? Whom did he say they would reverence?—38. Who saw the son? What did they say when they saw the son? To whom did they say this? What did they say the son was? What did they propose to do to him? What were they to seize? Whose inheritance were they to seize?—39. Who was caught? Who caught him? Out of what did they cast him? *What did they do to him? Who slew him?* Whom did they slay?—40. What question did our Lord ask at those to whom he spoke this parable?—41. *What did they say would be done to those husbandmen?* What would he do with his vineyard? What would those other husbandmen do? What would they render? When would they render the fruits?—42. Who returned them an answer? What did the builders reject? Where did they read of this stone being rejected? By whom was this stone rejected? What did the stone become? Whose doing was this? What was it? In whose eyes was it marvellous?—43. What was to be taken from them? To whom was it to be given? What was that nation to bring forth? What fruits was that nation to bring forth?—44. Who shall be broken? What shall happen to those who fall on this stone? What shall be the consequence to those on whom it shall fall? What shall grind him to powder?—45. Who heard his parables? What did they hear? What did they perceive? Of whom did they perceive he spake?—46. What did they seek? On whom did they seek to lay hands? What prevented them from laying hands on him? Whom did they fear? Why did they fear the multitude? For what did the multitude take him? Whom did they take for a prophet?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 33. *Parable*, An indirect illustration ;—the enforcement of a truth ;—a figurative representation.—*Householder*, Master of a house.—*Vineyard*, Garden where grapes grow.—*Hedged it*, Inclosed it with a hedge.—*Wine Press*, A machine for squeezing the juice from the grape.—*Tower*, A high building for lodging or watching.—*Husbandmen*, Farmers or labourers.—*Far country*, Distant land.

34. *Time of the fruit*, Harvest time when their rent was payable.—*The fruits of it*, That portion of the fruit of the ground which they were to pay as rent.

35. *Stoned*, Put him to death by throwing stones at him.

37. *Reverence*, Shew respect, and submit to him, or be afraid to refuse him.

38. *The heir*, The person who will obtain the inheritance after the death of its present possessor.—*Seize on his inheritance*, Keep the vineyard for our own use, and as our own property.

39. *Caught him*, Took hold of him.—*Slew him*, Put him to death.

41. *Miserably destroy*, Put to death in a dreadful manner.

42. *Rejected*, Refused, would not take.—*Head of the corner*, The principal stone in the building.—*Marvellous*, Truly wonderful.

43. *Kingdom of God*, The dispensation of the gospel, offered first to the Jews.

44. *Fall on this stone*, Stumble and fall by reason of unbelief in Christ.—*Grind him to powder*, His punishment will be most fearful and horrible.

45. *Perceived*, Saw and understood.

46. *Sought to lay hands on him*, Were desirous to seize him and put him to death.—*Multitude*, A great number of people ;—the common people of the Jews.—*Took him for a prophet*, Believed that he was a servant and messenger of God.

ILLUSTRATION OF THE SYMBOLS.

This parable when delivered by our Lord had a reference to the Jewish nation, whom God had chosen from all nations of the earth as his own peculiar people, hedged them round by his protecting hand, planted the choice vines of his word and ordinances among them, and expected that they would have considered and improved their privileges, and acknowledged and obeyed his laws. These however they neglected. They would not render unto God the fruits of a holy life, nor keep themselves from idolatry and wickedness; and when warned and exhorted by the prophets whom God sent for that purpose, they rejected them, evil intreated them, persecuted them and put them to death. God, at last, sent unto them his own Son; but they rejected the Messiah, and afraid lest the Romans should take away both their place and their nation, violently laid hold upon the Son of God, cast him out of Jerusalem, and put him to death.

And God hath, to the present day, “miserably destroyed” those wicked men. He hath preserved them for eighteen hundred years a distinct and separate people from every nation, and during the whole of that time, they have been, and still are, oppressed, and afflicted, and every nation among whom they have been scattered is “grinding them to powder.”

The parable not only refers to the Jews, but may also point out the great aggravation of the sins of those whose privileges are many, and who yet make no suitable improvement of them. They who enjoy the means of grace, the care and discipline of pious parents, the attention and instruction of faithful teachers, but who refuse to render to God the fruits of piety and good works, will be broken and perish; but they who not only refuse, but oppose and persecute, and fight against God and his cause, shall at last be driven away in their wickedness, and God shall cast them forth in the face of the world, and “Grind them to powder.”

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn,

That all our privileges are bestowed upon us by God ; who requires us to be diligent in improving them, and who will at last call us to account for the manner in which we have used them, ver. 33.

That though the carnal mind may consider God at a distance, and betray his trust, yet the diligent and faithful servant will act as in his presence, and obey his Master's orders delivered in the oracles of his word, ver. 33.

That the time of reckoning, though long delayed, will assuredly come. Let us improve the present moment, that when " the time of fruit draws near," we may be able to render our account with joy and not with grief.

That we are not left in this world to do as we please. Our Master is ever present with us, and is speaking to us weekly and daily by his ministers and by his Word. When they, in his name, require from us the fruits of holiness, and are refused, we, at the same time, refuse God who sent them, ver. 34.

That sin is like the letting out of water, small at first, but increases with indulgence. They who by negligence have misimproved their privileges, and have, therefore, no fruit to give, are tempted first to reject, then to abuse, then to beat, and, at last, to kill the faithful servants of Christ, who, at their Master's command, require from them an account of their stewardship, ver. 35.

That the forbearance of God with sinners, which is so great, and which often continues so long, is intended to lead them to repentance and amendment. Let us attend to the present call of his servants, lest he should, in just judgment, refuse us another, ver. 36.

That God's mercy and kindness to mankind are beyond the comprehension of men and angels. He who was insulted and blasphemed by his own creatures, who rejected his counsels and would none of his reproofs.

He, the Almighty God, whose servants were persecuted, and openly opposed, yet, for the sake even of those rebels, spared not his own Son, but freely "gave him up to the death for us all," ver. 37.

That perseverance in wickedness and sin, generally ends in infatuation and judicial blindness. Temporary success in destroying God's servants, leads the wicked at last to defy the Almighty, and attempt to seize on his inheritance, ver. 38.

That covetousness is the root of many sins. The unlawful possession of the fruits of the vineyard of another leads to injustice and cruelty; the possession of the inheritance itself leads to rebellion and murder, ver. 38.

That evil communications corrupt good manners.—When sinners take counsel together, evils of wider extent, and sins of a deeper dye are usually the consequences, ver. 38.

That a bare acknowledgment of Christ's dignity and character, is not enough to constitute a Christian. The husbandmen acknowledge the Son as the rightful heir, but they, at the same time, refuse their allegiance, and persevere in their opposition, ver. 38.

That when the flood-gates of sin are once opened, no man can determine where its waters shall stop, or what evil they shall do. They widen and deepen in their course. Christianity is first spoken against, then laid hold of and persecuted, then completely cast out from the heart and life, and, at last, attempted to be rooted out by fire and sword, ver. 39.

That sinners should calculate the consequences before they take up arms against the Almighty.—"What will he do?" is the question they should endeavour to answer, before they refuse the message of mercy sent them by God, ver. 40.

That God's ways shall at last be vindicated, even by the wicked themselves. Out of their own mouths they will be condemned, ver. 41.

That honesty is the best policy. They who unlawfully grasp at the inheritance, lose it and are destroyed.

the diligent and the honest are preferred to its
idleness, ver. 41.

an policy, opposed to God's appointments and
is always abortive, and leads to ruin, ver. 42.
The ruin of the wicked is generally the foundation
of purity and happiness to the Church of God.
The unfruitful branches are cut off, the others bring
forth fruit luxuriantly, ver. 43.

There are degrees of punishment, as well as de-
grees of happiness in another world. God will break
the vessels that others he will "grind into powder," ver.

The instructions we hear delivered should be
received with self-application. Let us always have
our hearts and our ears open to perceive when God
speaks, or to us, ver. 45.

Conversion to the unsanctified heart worketh
nothing. The Jews were convinced, but repented not;
they, on the contrary, sought to drown their conviction
in the blood of him who excited them, ver. 46.
We should neither be discouraged nor faint in our
struggle for souls, because of opposition or want of

If Christ was opposed, why should we wonder
if his servants are so too; and if he laboured
in vain, we are not always to count on success,



SECTION XL.

Fullness of Paying Tribute to Cesar.

Matt. xxii. 15—22.

See Mark xii. 13—17. Luke xx. 20—26.

NARRATIVE.

On hearing the parable of the Vineyard let out
to husbandmen, the rulers perceived that our Lord
spoke of them, and desired to lay hands upon him, and

put him to death, but were afraid of the people. Our Lord, however, was not deterred from instructing his followers, and accordingly again delivered the parable of the Marriage Supper, Matt. xxii. 1—14. (See also Luke xiv. 16. and Sect. 30.) This parable so incensed the Pharisees, that they combined with the Herodians, and insidiously enquired, if it was lawful to give tribute to Cesar, in order to find occasion against him, and put him to death. The wisdom of our Lord, however, evaded the snare thus laid for him, and obliged them to wonder and to hold their peace. This attempt, and our Lord's answer, form the subject of the present Section.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 15. Who took counsel? About what did they take counsel? Whom did they wish to entangle? In what did they wish to entangle him?—16. Whom did they send out? Who went with these disciples? To whom were they sent? What did they call him? What did they say he was? What did they say he taught? In what manner did he teach the way of God? For whom did he not care? What did he not regard? Who did not regard the person of men?—17. To whom was tribute paid? *What did they ask regarding this tribute?* Of whom did they enquire as to the lawfulness of giving tribute?—18. Whose wickedness was perceived? Who perceived it? What did Jesus perceive? What did Jesus say? What did Jesus call them?—19. What did he desire them to shew him? To whom were they to shew the tribute money? What did they bring him? To whom did they bring the penny? Who brought the penny?—20. To whom did Jesus speak? *What did he ask?* Where was this image and superscription?—(On the penny.)—21. Whose was this image and superscription? *What were they to render unto Cesar?* *What were they to render unto God?*—22. Who marvelled? When did they marvel? What did they do? Whom did they leave? Where did they go?

EXPLANATIONS.

rr. 15. *Pharisees* A sect of the Jews, self-righteous, generally very wicked.—*Took counsel*, Consulted together.—*Entangle him*, Insnare him; induce him to say sthng which they might twist and colour in such a ner as to misrepresent his character and motives.—; Speech.

l. *Herodians*, A party among the Jews strongly ated to Herod their present king.

l. *Give tribute*, Pay taxes.—*Cesar*, The Roman Emr, to whom the Jews were then in subjection.

l. *Perceived*, Saw.—*Tempt*, Try to induce me to smethng wrong.—*Hypocrites*, People who pretend ; what they really are not.

l. *Tribute money*, The money with which tribute paid.—*A penny*, A piece of money, value about apence half-penny sterling.

l. *Image*, Likeness, or head upon the coin.—*Superstition*, Writing, or words over the head upon the

. *Render*, To give back, or to return what has been ved.

l. *Marvelled*, Wondered; were quite surprised.

LESSONS.

rem this Section we learn,

t pretended friends are sometimes more dangerous an open enemies. The Christian, when openly oped, or persecuted, may defend himself, or flee; it when watched, and sought to be betrayed by a llow friend, his danger is unknown, and his escape ore doubtful, ver. 15.

t when persecutors are prevented by authority from il entreating, or destroying the Christian, they will nerally be found calumniating his character, misstruing his designs, and endeavouring to confound entangle him in his talk, ver. 15.

t even truth may become falsehood in the mouth of e wicked.—Christ was true, and taught the way of

God in truth ; and yet the Pharisees and Herod who said so, and believed it not, were, in the sight of God, and in their own consciences, guilty of hypocrisy and lies, ver. 16.

That even wicked men can judge of, and decide upon the qualifications of a Christian man, and a good preacher.—Let us draw a practical lesson from this malice, and endeavour to be what they preter admire, ver. 16.

That we ought to be constantly on our guard against the deceitfulness of our own heart in religious investigations.—Many, like the Pharisees and Herod make plausible enquiries, not for truth, but to say, and to overturn the cause which they preter to espouse, ver. 17.

That political disputes, and captious partizans should if possible, always be avoided by the Christian.—Religion thrives not in Pilate's Judgment Hall, nor the Theatre of Ephesus.—Choose whichever side may, Christianity will suffer ; for the more up and independent he appears, he will be the more hated and reviled by the opposite party, ver. 17.

That we should beware lest we be tempted to make religion a cloak for our covetousness.—Some who withhold tribute from Cesar, and defraud the revenue of their country, will even pretend to do so as a matter of conscience, and from a zeal for God and religion, ver. 17.

That no cunning can overreach God.—The most plausible pretensions cannot deceive him who searcheth hearts and trieth the reins of the children of men, ver. 18.

That friendly professions for malicious purposes, are the worst kind of hypocrisy.—They combine the craft of Satan, with his falsehood and lies, ver. 18.

That hypocritical professors may at times out-ride obedience the humble and sincere Christian.—As long as outward observances or duties promote their signs, hypocrites will be zealous and punctual, no longer, ver. 19.

unconscientious Christians will always be good citizens.—Christianity neither loosens the bonds, nor does it remove the obligations in Society, but is intended to strengthen them, ver. 21.

Evil rulers are to be obeyed so far, but no farther than their commands are permitted by, or are agreeable to, the word of God, ver. 21.

Civili-atriotic exertions, or secular obligations are never to be set aside, or set aside our spiritual duties to God, or exertions for the welfare of our immortal souls. We may be zealous for Cesar, but we must be more so for God and eternity, ver. 21.

Ministers and teachers must never be backward in giving the whole counsel of God, and their people's.—Though the Pharisees and Herodians enquire of wicked motives, our Lord did not send them without their answer, ver. 21.

We ought never to neglect plain and positive duty for fear of the consequences.—When fear suggests delay in the performance of duty, we ought still to proceed forward, trusting in God; he can make its faithful discharge the means of silencing gainsayers, and driving our enemies to flight, ver. 22.

The declaration of truth is always unsavoury to critical professors.—Those truths, which attach to the true disciple to his Lord, drive the Pharisees away, ver. 22.

SECTION XLI.

Parable of the Ten Virgins.—Matth. xxv. 1—13

NARRATIVE

OUR Lord by his wisdom had evaded the snare laid for him by the Pharisees and Herod the Sadducees, who denied the existence of angels and spirits, and, of course, did not believe in a fu-

ture state, came to him and questioned him on the resurrection, (Matt. xxii. 22—33. Mark xii. Luke xx. 27—38.) The wisdom of his answer again so pleased the Pharisees, that one of them asked a question as to the first and great command of the law, (Matt. xxii. 34—40. Mark xii. 28—34. Luke 39—48.) and our Lord in return, proposed one as to the Messiah being David's son, and at the same time, David's Lord, (Matt. xxii. 41—46. Mark 37. Luke xx. 41—44.) Jesus again denounced against the Pharisees, and lamented the future destruction of Jerusalem, (Matt. xxiii. 1—39. Mark 40. Luke xx. 45—47.) approved the widow's who cast two mites into the treasury, (Mark xi 44. Luke xxi. 1—4.) and again foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, (Matt. xxiv. 1—43. Mark xiii. Luke xxi. 5—36.) After this he delivered the parable of the ten virgins, which forms the subject of the present section.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 1. To what is the kingdom of heaven here compared? What did they take? Who went forth? For what purpose did they go forth? Whom did they go to?—2. How many classes of virgins were there? How many were wise? How many were foolish? *What distinguished the wise from the foolish virgins?*—3. How many neglected to take oil? What did they take? What did they neglect to take?—4. Who took oil? In what way did they take their oil? What did they take besides their vessels?—5. What did the bridegroom do? What did they do during that time? Who tarried? Who slumbered and slept while the bridegroom tarried? How many of the virgins slumbered and slept? What happened at midnight? What was made known? Who was coming? What were they doing? Who were to go out? Whom were they to go with?—7. *What did the virgins do when the cry was heard?* What did they trim? Who trimmed their lamps? What did they do to their lamps?—8. Who spoke to the

virgins ? What did they ask ? Whose oil did they ask ? From whom did they ask oil ? Why did they ask oil ? Whose lamps had gone out ?—9. Who answered this request of the foolish virgins ? What did they refuse to give them ? Why did they refuse to give them part of their oil ? Whither did they desire them to go ? What did they desire them to do ? What were they to buy ? For whom were they to buy the oil ? *What happened while they were seeking oil ?*—10. Who came ? When did the bridegroom come ? Who went with him ? Whither did they go with him ? With whom did the wise virgins go ? What happened when they went in to the marriage ? What was shut ?—11. Who came to the door ? When did they come to the door ? What did they say ? What did they wish to be opened ?—12. Who answered them ? To whom did the bridegroom speak ? What did he say about them ? Whom did he not know ?—13. What should we do ? Why should we watch ? Who is it that cometh ? What do we not know ?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 1. *Kingdom of heaven*, see section 19, p. 90.—*Virgins*, Young unmarried women.—*Bridegroom*, A man about to be married.

5. *Slumbered*, Were drowsy, and allowed themselves to sleep.

6. *Midnight*, In the middle of the night.

7. *Trimmed*, Prepared their lamps so as to make them burn brighter.

12. *Verily*, Truly, it is truth I speak.

ILLUSTRATION OF THE SYMBOLS.

This parable is intended to point out the danger of possessing a mere profession of religion, without its reality,—of having a name to live, and yet being dead. This our Lord illustrated by a custom among the Jews at their marriages, when the bridegroom went at night to bring home the bride. On the way he was commonly met by the bridemaids with lamps, who welcomed him and lighted him to the residence of the bride,

where a feast was generally prepared for him and friends of both parties.

The *ten virgins* signify the members of Christ's church upon earth, who make a profession of religion, whose outward conduct and moral character are such as not only to be beyond the reach of church censure, but who, in charity, must be considered the disciples of Christ.

The *lamps* which all such characters possess, are intended to typify the outward religious profession which they make before men. All these professors go forward in the routine of outward duties and religious observances, to meet Christ, the bridegroom, professing attachment to his cause, and their submission to his government.

But five were *wise*, and five were *foolish*. This teaches us, that all those who make a profession of religion are not the genuine followers of Christ; but that there are regenerate and unregenerate persons in the church, and will be so till the end of all things.

The foolish had *lamps*, as well as the wise, but they wanted *oil* in their vessels with which to feed the flame when they would require it; whereas, the wise had oil in their vessels; i. e. they had grace in the heart, and holy affections, as well as the lamp of outward profession.

The *tarrying of the bridegroom* represents the interval between the assumption of a religious profession, the time when the individual shall be called to appear before his Lord in judgment.

The *dormant and inattentive state* of the virgins exhibits the comparative indifference, and want of watchfulness in professing Christians, during the season of health and prosperity.

The *cry* that was made at *midnight*, imports the prospect of death, and marks the suddenness and uncertainty of life. The Son of Man often comes as unexpectedly and suddenly as a thief in the night.

The *str* that was made to *trim their lamps*, indicates that though in health professors may remain at

case, yet, when death approaches, there will be an inquiry into the state of their souls. The unconcerned will then arise and search for materials with which to fit themselves to meet their impartial Judge. But as the foolish virgins found, when they came to trim their lamps, that *they were going out*, and they had nothing with which to renew their flame; so the high expectations and false appearances of the hypocrites will be then utterly extinguished. They will then want that spirituality of mind,—or true faith, which is its source,—by which to lighten up their dying hopes.

This also shews the momentous distinction between the righteous and the wicked. The wise *slumbered* as well as the foolish; but then, when necessity called for it, they were ready, because their heart was right towards God, and their soul had been already renewed and sanctified by his grace. Thus the believer, who is possessed of true faith, and has the peace of God reigning in his heart, is prepared for every emergency; and though for a time the allurements of the world may cause a remission of his watchfulness, yet the call of death, however sudden it may be, will not discompose him;—he is at once prepared to meet with his Lord.

The foolish virgins, who have *no oil*, being now awake to a sense of their own folly in neglecting to procure it, apply themselves with earnestness to the wise virgins, their fellow Christians, for a part of theirs. The wise, however, have nothing but what they have received, and that is no more than will be sufficient for themselves. The foolish must now begin that work which should have been the great concern of their lives. The soul has been neglected, and now they are called away from the only scene where opportunity or means are appointed for its salvation.

While they are thus in their trouble and distress, they depart still farther and farther from Christ, the bridegroom. He alone could supply their wants, but they see not the beauty of his compassion; and judging of him by themselves, they consider him an hard task-master, and endeavour to seek among strangers what

he alone can give. Ministers and Christian friends, vows and prayers, vain regrets and resolutions of future amendment, occupy the place of sincere repentance and true faith in a compassionate Saviour. They thus seek in strange ways for light, which is but darkness and for oil which will not burn, till their term of life and probation expires, the bridegroom arrives,—they are not ready,—and *the door is shut*. They have neglected the time,—the only time allowed them for their preparations for eternity, and now their Lord knoweth them not.

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn.

That as many go forth to meet Christ, who are not ready for his coming, we should beware of thinking that a mere profession of religion will fit us for his approach, ver. 1.

That although God only can search the heart, and infallibly know who possess the oil of his Holy Spirit, yet none have a right to the privileges of the church, or to fellowship with its members, who are destitute of the lamp of an outward profession, ver. 1.

That we should not allow ourselves to faint or be discouraged, when we find formalists and hypocrites among the people of God. The foolish will still be found among the wise, and the tares among the wheat, till God shall finally separate them at the last day, ver. 2.

That as it is difficult in the day time of prosperity, to distinguish betwixt the wise and the foolish, we ought each for himself, scrupulously to examine our hearts, as well as our lives, and endeavour to come to a just conclusion as to our state before God, ver. 2.

That the folly of the sinner consists in resting in an outward profession of religion, without its spirit; in satisfying himself with the shadow, and neglecting the substance, ver. 3.

That love to God, and preparation for eternity, constitute true wisdom. Man may treat the Christian with

contempt, but the wise of the world will be found fools in comparison with him, ver. 4.

That while formalists and hypocrites act as if profession was the whole of religion, we ought to consider it only as the appendage,—the vessel in which the oil is contained,—the lamp in which it is to burn, ver. 4.

That the company of lukewarm and hypocritical professors, is detrimental, and often dangerous. Even the wise virgins, by the example of the foolish, allow themselves to slumber and sleep, ver. 5.

That delay on the part of God, should never be allowed to prevent our watching and striving after a likeness to his character, and a fitness for his coming, ver. 5.

That forbearance on the part of God, is too often the cause of sin on the part of the sinner, ver. 5.

That though the sinner may be spared long, yet death will come at last. The day of life and prosperity must close in the midnight shades of sickness and death, ver. 6.

That want of preparation for the last conflict with death, will not prevent the battle. The sinner, as well as the saint, when the cry is made, must “go forth to meet him,” ver. 6.

That concern about religion, is not always a proof of being religious. Many in a moment of trouble may be found attempting to trim their lamps, who yet have no oil, and no inclination to procure it where alone it is to be found, ver. 7.

That times of trouble and distress are peculiarly fitted for self-examination. We should always watch; but on these occasions, we should examine more particularly the grounds of our faith, and the security of our state, ver. 7.

That though hypocrites may now deceive themselves with a bare profession of religion, yet at last they will irremediably discover their awful mistake, ver. 8.

That the carnal mind is averse to God and his ways. Even in the time of distress, the sinner will be more inclined to apply to his own resources, or to his fel-

low-men, than to God, who alone can give him relief, ver. 8.

That though Christians receive from God grace sufficient for themselves, yet they have nothing to spare for the benefit of others, ver. 9.

That though God only can bestow salvation on the sinner, yet Christians may advise and direct, and assist them to come to him, ver. 9.

That no friendship, or compassion to our fellow-men, should tempt us to do any thing which will offend God, or risk the salvation of our own souls. "Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you," ver. 9.

That delays in religion are both criminal and dangerous. They who delay till the time of sickness and death to examine into the state of their souls, may be overtaken by death before the work be accomplished, ver. 10.

That the souls of believers are at death immediately admitted into heaven.—They who were ready went in with Christ to the marriage, ver. 10.

That though strict morality, and an outward profession of religion, are of great importance in society, they will not satisfy the justice of God, or secure an entrance into heaven.—Against all who are not united to Christ by a living faith, the door will at last be for ever shut, ver. 10.

That the close of a sinner's life, is at the same time the death of his hopes.—All who are not ready at death, will find the door of mercy shut against them for ever, ver. 10.

That though sinners, from pride or carelessness, may now, for a long time, neglect God, and despise his offers, yet the time will come, either in this world or the next, when they will be aware of their guilt and their folly, and be constrained to supplicate for mercy, ver. 11.

That the extorted confessions, or supplications of terrified sinners, either in distress or in the prospect of death, are not always the fruits of saving faith, or of genuine repentance.—Fear of punishment, and the

love of sin, are often found in the same person at the same time, ver. 11.

That however flaming the profession of the hypocrite, or however correct the life of the formalist they are equally, with the greatest sinner, unknown to God, as his servants or people, ver. 12.

That the uncertainty of life should be a constant stimulus to exertion, and an inducement to watchfulness.—

If the cry of death may be made *to-night*, let it be our care to be prepared *to-day*, ver. 13.

That as God has been pleased to conceal from us the day of our death, we ought never to be over-anxious to possess the fleeting and empty enjoyments of time, or be cast down when it pleases God to deprive us of them, ver. 13.

SECTION XLII.

Parable of the Talents.—Matth. xxv. 14—30.

NARRATIVE.

OUR Lord having, in the parable of the Ten Virgins, shewn the danger of mere outward profession in religion, and of inattention and delay in the concerns of the soul, proceeded to point out the necessity of activity and diligence in improving those opportunities and privileges given us by God in this world; and that it is not enough, that men abstain from positive evil, if they are not faithful and diligent in the performance of the duties of the station in which God has placed them, as an evidence of their love and devotedness to his cause and service. This he illustrated in the parable of the Talents, which forms the subject of the present section.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 14. What is compared to a man travelling into a far country? Whom did he call? What did he deli-

ver to them? To whom did he deliver his goods?—15. What did he give to the first servant? What did the second receive? What did he give to the third? *According to whose abilities did he distribute these talents?* What did he do after dividing the talents?—16. How many talents had the first servant received? What did he do with them? How many did he make them?—17. How many talents had the second servant received? What did he gain?—18. What had the third servant received? What did he do? Where did he dig? Why did he dig in the earth? What did he hide?—19. Who came back again? When did their Lord come back? What did he do with his servants when he came back?—20. What did the first servant bring to his Lord? What did he say his Lord had given him? *What did he say he had gained?*—21. What did his Lord call him? Over what had he been faithful? Over what was he to make him ruler? Into what was he to enter?—22. What did the second servant say he had received? *What did he say he had gained besides them?*—23. What did his Lord call him? What had he been over a few things? What was his Lord to make him? Into what was he to enter?—24. Who came last to his Lord? What kind of man did he say his Lord was? What did he say his Lord did, where he had not sowed? What did he say his Lord did, where he had not strawed?—25. What did the servant say he had done with his talent? What did he say made him hide the talent? What did he offer back?—26. What did his Lord call him? Where had he said his master reaped? Where had he said his master had gathered?—27. What ought he to have put to the exchangers? What would his Lord have received? When would he have received his own? With what would he have received his own?—28. What was to be taken from him? From whom was the talent to be taken? To whom was the talent to be given?—29. What will be done to those who have much? What shall they have? What shall be done to those who have nothing? What shall be taken from them?—30. *Where was the servant to be*

cast? Who was to be cast into outer darkness? What shall be in outer darkness?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 14. *Kingdom of heaven*, See section 19, p. 90.

15. *A talent* was about £187 : 10s. sterling money.—

Several ability, According to the capacity and skill possessed by each of them.

19. *Reckoneth with them*, Takes an account from each of what had been done.

21. *Joy of thy Lord*, That happiness and enjoyment which thy Lord has prepared for himself and his friends.

24. *Hard man*, Greedy, avaricious, and unreasonable man

26. *Slothful*, Indolent and lazy.

27. *Exchangers*, Bankers, or dealers in money.—
Usury, Interest, or a price for the use which might have been made of money borrowed from another.

30. *Unprofitable servant*, Worthless, a servant who has not been useful.—*Gnashing of teeth*, Biting and grinding of the teeth one upon another.

ILLUSTRATION OF THE SYMBOLS.

This Parable points out the relation which subsists in this world betwixt God and the sinner. He is their *Master*, who assigns them their work, and enjoins them to faithfulness, watchfulness, diligence, and perseverance in its execution. Though he is ever present in all places, and at all times, yet not being sensibly present to any, and not present at all in the opinion of the ignorant and faithless servants, he is here represented as having removed to a far country.

The *several talents* which he assigns to his servants, denote their powers of body and mind, their means of grace, and opportunities of usefulness and improvement; in short, every advantage which men severally enjoy in this world, and of which a good or a bad use may be made. The choice blessings of God, indicated by the five talents, and which are committed to the care and exertions of him who was possessed of greatest *ability*,

point out, not only the possession of great abilities, but also the unrestrained enjoyment of the means of grace, and precious opportunities of usefulness to the souls of sinners. The *two talents* represent the possession of more moderate natural qualifications, circumscribed, or interrupted opportunities of spiritual improvement, and fewer opportunities of recommending Christ, or benefiting the souls of their fellow-sinners; while the *one talent* seems evidently to refer, not only to small capacities of mind and spiritual improvement, but also to the least valuable of all the gifts bestowed by God, in the form of honour, authority, wealth, or temporal enjoyments. The expression *several ability* may mean, that God gives to each such talents and opportunities of improving them, as are fitted to that station of life which he occupies, and which, if well improved, will ensure to him the approbation of his master in heaven.

Those servants whose opportunities of improvement are accompanied by spiritual *ability* and strength from their great Master, are represented as using their talents to the best advantage, and by this diligence doubling them; while the slothful and unfaithful servant, who is entrusted with the one talent, cannot be troubled even with the keeping of it, and determines to lay it aside, and to live without care, and without exertion; and persuading himself, that his master is both avaricious and unreasonable, he begins to question his authority, despise his character, hate his person, and refuse him obedience.

His talent is *hidden in the earth*; indicating, that they who refuse to occupy their talents for God, never receive the full benefit of them, even for themselves; and for this act of omission he is condemned, in order to shew, that the wicked will be punished for neglecting to *improve* their talents, though they may never have *abused* them; and also, that they who do not *advance* in the way to heaven, will be cast out from heaven, as well as those who are rapidly declining in the paths of wickedness and crime.

Though, in this case, those who had *most* committed

made the best use of it, yet we are not to suppose this is always so, or that the Parable insinuates any such thing. It seems only to indicate, that a strict account must be rendered of the *smallest* ; and advantages, as well as of the greatest ; and will be no excuse for any one to plead, that he has not communicated to him, if he fail to make a use of it ; for in proportion as he had little given, he had the more need to improve it.

Day of reckoning is the day of judgment, or resurrection. At that time shall the diligent servant receive his reward, not indeed *for*, but certainly *according* to his diligence and perseverance in his Master's work. He that received and improved ten talents, or pounds, was honoured with the approbation of his Lord, and rewarded with ten cities ; and he that received and improved, according to his ability, the five talents, or pounds, shall receive the *same approbation*, but *reward*. See Luke xix. 16.

The servant who had received only one talent, offers an excuse, that his Lord was a hard master, *because he had not sown, &c.* By this he insinuated, that his Lord required more from him, than he had power to perform, or means of effecting, just as if one should ask for a crop, where he had sowed no seed. He is that, having received one talent only, which is but little power of trading, had he allowed it to remain in his hands, he was in danger of losing it. It represents that class of persons, who decline the requisitions of God, as being greater than they are able to perform ; and because they suppose that they cannot fulfil them, like the slothful servant, they are idle, and resolve to do nothing. Thus they combine *want of inclination* to what is good, with the *lack of natural ability*. The slothful servant might have put out his talent to use, but he would not ; so men may have the power of observing duties, but they neglect them. And as the slothful servant was condemned in his own mouth, so will they ; for though their ability is but small, yet they should improve them each

as they are ; and if they endeavour to do so, enlarge their abilities, and more and more inclined to do better. Every sinner will on this account, be inexcusable, even in his own eyes, as he will be conscious that he might have done better, if he had chosen ; their wills were depraved, and “ they would have gone to Christ that they might have life.”

The day of reckoning to the sinner, will be a day of fearfulness, uncertainty, and terror. The security of his hiding place, from the just indignation of an offended God, begins in sickness to be shaken ; death, it totters and falls. At judgment, his position will be met by the frown of his almighty God. His excuses for his neglect will but aggravate his guilt, and he will justly be condemned, even from the mouth of his Judge. His talent is taken from him, and bestowed on him who is likely to be better improved, to teach us, that those who improve what they have, shall have their talents increased, whereas, those who neglect to improve the opportunities which they enjoy, will at last be stripped of them altogether. The slothful servant is cast out, stripped of what little he had formerly received, cast naked, and defenceless, and for ever in darkness, where are weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn,

That we are not our own masters, but the servants of Christ, and ought therefore to attend to his will, in preference to our own, ver. 14.

That though God has for wise reasons, removed his sensible presence, yet his faithful servants should act as in the presence of him who is their witness, and will soon be our judge, ver. 14.

That all our talents are the property of God ; given not for our own pleasure, but to be employed in his service, and for his glory, ver. 14.

That every one ought to be diligent in improving the talents which he has received, whether these

w. It is for God to give as he sees best ; but it is for us to improve to the utmost, all that we receive, ver. 15.

As alone is the period for proving our diligence and faithfulness to God our master. He is now leaving us to the regulation of conscience, of his word and Spirit, but he will return at last to take an account of our doings, ver. 15.

Our success in the divine life depends on the number of our privileges, as well as the amount of diligence. Even faithful servants will be able to use but two talents, while others will be able to use five, ver. 16, 17.

Laziness and selfishness, which at first merely plead excuse, will, if not surmounted, lead to the abuse, the neglect, or the total loss of our talents, ver. 18. Idleness and sloth are their own punishment. The folly of digging and hiding, the unhappiness of anxiety and fear in the slothful servant, were more pressing and painful, than all the labour and fatigue of those who were diligent, ver. 18.

Though sinners may be long successful, the day of reckoning will come at last.—To those who are at Jerusalem, Christ shall come as a thief in the night, ver. 19.

While the Christian gives all the glory to God, he does not either to conceal nor deny what God hath wrought by him.—Humility and self-abasement are compatible with a consciousness of divine help in the performance of duty, ver. 20—22.

Though men may judge hardly of us, and condemn us innocently ; yet God, who is our Master, cannot be deceived, and will reward his people according to their deserts, ver. 21, 23.

The approbation of God will be measured to his servants according to their faithfulness, and not according to their ability.—As their talents were bestowed according to their ability, so will be the measure of their enjoyment in heaven ; but the approbation of

God to the diligent servant with *four* talents, was the same as to him who had ten, ver. 21, 23.

That though Christians ought and must serve God for his own sake, yet that it is both their privilege and their duty, to encourage themselves in their labour, by "having respect to the recompense of reward," ver. 21, 23.

That it is the love of sin, and the neglect of duty, which lead men to unjust and unworthy sentiments regarding the conduct and the character of God, ver. 24.

That the wicked may possess a certain fear of God, while, at the same time, they have no love for him. But this fear is a spirit of bondage, which drives them from his presence, and unfits them for either actively or successfully serving him, ver. 25.

That the wicked have a very false estimate of duty.—They will not be condemned merely for what they have done, but specially and chiefly for what they have neglected, ver. 25.

That the neglect to improve a talent will be condemned by God, as well as the abuse of it.—Though the servant return his talent uninjured, yet if it is unimproved, he will be pronounced not only a slothful, but a wicked servant, ver. 26.

The neglect of our talents is an injury to our fellow men.—Had the talent not been hid, the public would have been accommodated, the exchangers would have been employed, and his master would have been profited, ver. 27.

That our talents are, at all times, the property of God.—We may hide them, or neglect them, or attempt to destroy them; but God will at last claim and recal them as his own, ver. 27.

That to neglect our talents and privileges is the sure way to lose them.—"To him that hath not, even what he hath shall be taken from him," ver. 28.

That in the wise disposals of Providence, the diligent and faithful Christian shall ultimately be benefited by every thing which happens around him, even by

the neglects, or the wickedness of his fellow-men,
ver. 28.

That the way to increase our talents, and strengthen
our graces, is diligently and perseveringly to culti-
vate those which we at present possess, ver. 29.

That the talents, or privileges which we possess, should
be diligently improved, as they are but temporary. It
is folly for the wicked to boast themselves of that
which shall ere long prove their curse, and be taken
from them, ver. 29.

That punishment awaits the idle professor, as well as
the openly profane.—Outer darkness shall be equally
the lot of both, ver. 30.

That the latter end of the ungodly shall be dreadful.—
The stubborn, the proud hearted, and high minded
sinner, will be constrained to weep ;—the lovers of
mammon and the votaries of pleasure, must gnash
with their teeth, and mourn in anguish without end,
ver. 30.

SECTION XLIII.

The Last Judgment.—Mat. xxv. 31—46.

NARRATIVE.

AFTER delivering the parable of the Ten Virgins,
and the Talents, our Lord proceeded to enforce
both, by an account of the last general judgment, which
forms the subject of the present Section.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 31. Who shall come in his glory ? Who shall be
with him ? On what shall he sit ?—32. What shall be
gathered before him ? Before whom shall all nations be
gathered ? Who shall be separated ? After what man-
ner shall the people be separated from one another ?—
33. Where shall the righteous, (compared to sheep,) be
placed ? Where shall the wicked, (compared to goats,) be
placed ?—34. To whom shall the King speak first ?
What shall he call them ? What are they to inherit ?
For whom had the kingdom been prepared ? From what

time had the kingdom been prepared for them?—35. When did they give him meat? When did they give him drink? When did they take him in?—36. When did they clothe him? When did they visit him? When did they come to him?—37. Who shall return an answer to this? What shall they call him? What did they ask about his being an hungered? What did they ask about his being thirsty?—38. What did they ask as to his being a stranger? What did they ask as to his being naked?—39. What did they ask as to his being sick, or in prison?—40. Who shall answer to this wondering of the righteous? To whom had they done all this? To whom did Christ consider it to be done?—41. To whom shall the Judge next address himself? *What shall he call them? What shall he desire them to do?* Into what must they depart? For whom had this fire been prepared?—42. What had they done when he was an hungered? What had they done when he was thirsty?—43. What had they done when he was a stranger? What had they done when he was naked? What had they done when he was sick, and in prison?—44. Who shall answer to this declaration? What shall they ask as to their seeing him an hungered, &c.? Unto whom had they not ministered?—45. Who shall answer this question of the ungodly? Unto whom had they not done these things? To whom did our Lord consider them as not doing them?—46. *Whither shall the wicked go?* Into what kind of punishment shall the wicked go? *Whither shall the righteous go?* Into what kind of life shall the righteous go?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 31. *The Son of Man*, A title given to Christ, the Son of God, particularly marking his human nature, and pointing him out as the promised seed of the woman.

Ver. 33. *Sheep*, The righteous, thus represented because of their gentle, and peaceable, and holy nature.—*Goats*, The wicked, thus represented because of their carnal and unholy character.

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Ver. 40. *Verily, truly.—Inasmuch as,* Because, or since.—*The least of these my brethren,* The humblest, or most afflicted of those Christians who professed to be my followers.

Ver. 44. *Minister, Serve, or help.*

LESSONS.

From this section we learn,

That though men may refuse to honour Christ now, there is a time coming when they will be constrained to witness and to feel the glory of his character, and the greatness of his power, ver. 31.

That all men shall be judged by Christ. He who is now the witness of our actions, will at the last day be our judge, and shall acquit or condemn us according to our works, ver. 32.

That the true character of all men shall be discovered and made public at the last day.—We may now deceive ourselves and each other, but the Lord, who knows the character and the hearts of all men, will at last exhibit us as we really are, ver. 32.

That as a full and final separation of the righteous from the wicked shall take place at last, we ought now to accustom ourselves to associate with the one, and to forsake the other, ver. 32.

That though the righteous may endure much suffering, and be despised by their fellow-men upon earth, yet Christ will at last confess and honour them as his brethren, in the presence of an assembled world, ver. 33.

That the plausible appearances of the self-righteous, and the hypocrite now, will at judgment be unable to protect them from the knowledge of their Judge, or from public disgrace, and endless punishment, ver. 33.

That the saints, though they may be poor in worldly goods, are nevertheless rich in the assurance, though not yet in the possession, of a kingdom, more glorious and lasting than the world can afford them, ver. 34.

That as Christ is the King as well as the Judge of all men, we ought to submit to his authority, and obey his commands, ver. 34.

That the saints, and the saints only, are of God. God is the sure fountain of his Christ is the only channel by which it is conveyed to men, ver. 34.

That good works and active benevolence, many fruits, and the only sure tests and saving faith, ver. 35, 36.

That as the least of our good works, done of Christ, though forgotten by us, are remembered for our advantage by him, we are and perseveringly to abound more and more in works of faith and labours of love, ver. 37.

That the righteous never pride themselves in their works, and will at the judgment disclaim them, knowing that they have nothing but what they have received; and if they have received them, they have no right to boast, ver. 37, 38, 39.

That those of a humble and a contrite heart, who abound in good works, are generally the more ready to mourn over the neglect, and to strive in the performance, of any duty, ver. 38, 39.

That difference of rank should make no difference in the love among true Christians. The very presence of Christ is regarded by the believer, as the representation of his Lord and Saviour, ver. 40.

That as Christ acknowledges acts of kindness done to him by his people, as being done to himself, we ought to express our gratitude for his favour by earnest endeavours to do them good, ver. 40.

That as all true Christians are acknowledged as his brethren, we ought to rejoice in their fellowship, and constantly endeavour to walk with them, ver. 40.

That absence from Christ is the consummation of misery.—They who enjoy his company are blessed. They who must depart from him, will be miserable, ver. 41.

That as the misery and punishment of the wicked will be for ever, we ought to consider no evil

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moment as desirable or good, which may, in the least degree, prevent or retard our escape from them, ver. 41.

That they who now choose the Devil as their master, shall be punished with him in his place for ever, ver. 41.

That freedom from gross sins, or the suppression of corrupt and unholy desires, is not sufficient to constitute a Christian.—True faith, while it purifies the heart, also worketh by love, ver. 42, 43.

That they who are the enemies of Christ's people, are the enemies of Christ himself. In so far as they neglect, despise, or persecute his brethren, they do so to himself, ver. 42, 43.

That the wicked who think that holiness consists merely in abstaining from sin, deceive themselves to their ruin.—They will not in judgment be condemned so much for not doing evil, as for their neglecting to do good, ver. 42, 43.

That the present moment is the only time allowed for self-examination, and consequent amendment.—The ungodly will at last perceive the wickedness of their heart; but then it will be too late to apply for its renewal, ver. 44.

The heart of man, by nature, is not only wicked, but also deceitful.—They who have allowed themselves to be blinded by self-love, and lulled by the false representations of Satan and their own heart, crying, "Peace, peace," will have their eyes opened at last to the delusive blandishments of the world and their own folly, when there will be no room for repentance or escape, ver. 44.

That the wicked are more apt to pride themselves on the merits of their doings, than even the humble believer.—The saint, viewing his conduct in the light of the gospel, is ashamed of his deficiencies; while the sinner, considering only how much better he is than perhaps he might be, is surprised that he should at all be blamed, ver. 44.

That the neglect of acts of kindness to Christ's people is a mark of indifference and hostility to Christ himself, ver. 45.

That the wicked who affect to despise the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, have a false estimation of true dignity.—The high minded will at last perceive that they would have been honoured, even in this life, by communion and fellowship with the very lowliest or humblest of the brethren of Christ, ver. 45.

That the opportunities afforded us in providence, of exercising our benevolence to Christ's people, should be considered as our greatest privileges, and improved accordingly, ver. 45.

That Christians, in this life, should never be dissatisfied with their lot, or allow themselves to be discouraged or faint under their sufferings.—All that they can endure now is but for a time, while the glory that shall follow will continue for ever, ver. 46.

That they are fools who seek their happiness in sin and their portion in this world.—Unholy pleasures may, like sweet poison, please for the moment; but they will at last kill their victim, and destroy his peace for ever, ver. 46.

SECTION XLIV.

Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet.—John xiii. 1—17.

NARRATIVE.

AFTER delivering the account of the last judgment our Lord again foretold his sufferings and death and in the house of Simon the leper, was again anointed. Immediately after this was done, Judas seems to have gone and bargained with the Jewish council to betray his Lord, and deliver him into their power. (Mat. xxv. 1—16. Mark xiv. 1—11. Luke xxi. 37, 38. xxi. 1—6. Our Lord, in the meantime, sent Peter and John to prepare the Passover, which he ate with them, (Mat. xxvi. 17—30. Mark xiv. 12—17. Luke xxi. 7—18.

and during which he washed their feet, as recorded in a passage which forms the subject of the present section.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 1. Who knew that his hour was come? Before what feast was this? Out of what was Jesus to depart? To whom was Jesus to go? Whom had he loved? Where were they? How did he love them?—2. Who was to betray Jesus? Whose son was Judas Iscariot? What had been put into his heart? By whom was this put into his heart? What was ended?—3. Into whose hands had all things been given? Who had given all things into Jesus' hand? From whom had he come? To whom was he to go?—4. From what did he rise? What did he do with his garments? What did he do to himself? With what did he gird himself?—5. What did he do, after he had girded himself? Into what did he pour the water? What did he begin to wash? What did he do with the towel? With what towel did he wipe them?—6. Who stopped him from washing his feet? What did Peter ask him?—7. Who answered Peter? What did Peter not know? When should he know the meaning of what Christ did?—8. What did Peter say that Jesus should not do to his feet? What answer did Jesus make to this? What would be the consequence of not being washed by Christ? With whom would Peter have no part?—9. What did Peter call Jesus? What did he desire Jesus to wash?—10. What did Jesus say was alone necessary to be washed? What would they be who were washed by Christ? Who were clean? Were they all clean?—11. What did Jesus know? Who was not clean? What made Jesus say, "Ye are not all clean?"—12. What did Jesus take? When did he take his garments?—What did he do when he had taken his garments? To whom did he speak? What did he ask them?—13. What did they call Jesus? What did Jesus say was well? What did he say he was?—14. Who had washed their feet? What was Jesus to them?

What should they do to one another?—15. Who gave them? Who were to follow this example? What were they to do?—16. What is said of the servants? Who is not greater than his Lord?—17. Who would be said of him that is sent?—17. Who would be? What would make them happy? What was necessary before they could do them?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 1. *Passover*, A holy ordinance of God, as observed by the Jews, and originally instituted to commemorate the deliverance which they obtained in Egypt on that night when the destroying angel entered every house belonging to the Egyptians, and slew the first-born, but *passed over* those houses of the Jews, the lintel and door posts of which he found the blood of the Passover sprinkled.—*Hour was come*, The time of death, when he was to close his redeeming work on earth.

Ver. 2. *Betray him*, Treacherously reveal what was, and deliver him into the power of his enemies.

Ver. 4. *Girded himself*, Fastened the towel, and girded his kin, round his waist.

Ver. 8. *Thou hast no part with me*, Thou shalt not be numbered among my true disciples on earth. nor have any part of the inheritance provided for them in heaven.

Ver. 15. *An example*, A copy, or pattern, for imitation.

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn,

That the end of the Christian's life is the beginning of the Christian's glory.—His removal from this world introduces him immediately to God, and to the happiness of heaven, ver. 1.

That we should improve the present time in preparation for eternity.—If Jesus did so, who knew the hour of his death, it behoves us much more so, who are every moment on the brink of death, ver. 1.

They who are beloved of God, shall be preserved
 over, we ought to be diligent now in securing
 our, and in making our calling and election
 sure. 1.

Even one of Christ's apostles was deceived and
 led by Satan, we ought constantly to be on our
 guard against his temptations, knowing that he yet
 abides about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he
 may devour, ver. 2.

There is no sin so heinous, and no wickedness so
 great as that we should think ourselves secure against
 temptation.—If Satan succeeded in persuading
 the apostles to betray the Lord of glory, what
 would he not attempt to make us perpetrate, ver. 2.

The absolute disposal of all things has been com-
 mitted into the hands of Christ, his people ought not
 to rejoice on this account, but should come to
 receive from his inexhaustable fulness, all ne-
 cessary gifts and graces for the supply of their poverty
 and wants, ver. 3.

The Christian, and the Christian only is truly and
 spiritually rich.—He is the fellow-heir of Christ
 as all things committed into his hands by God ;
 the wicked, though they may enjoy much in
 the world, have nothing of their own, but will at last
 be stripped of all, and be consigned to eternal poverty
 and distress, ver. 3.

The Christian has not only no cause to repine, but
 constant cause of gratitude.—He can never want
 anything good for him while his Lord and Saviour is
 the possessor of all things in heaven and in earth,

Christ is the only source from which all our bless-
 ings come. All things having been committed
 by the Father, it is foolishness in men to seek
 them from God, without any reference to Christ,

We ought to be prepared for, as well as perform-
 ing. 4.

That imprudent interference or obstacle the way of our duty, by misinformed or thren, should always be met by mild and friendly forbearance, ver. 7.

That we ought always to cherish a sense of our ignorance and weakness, and endeavour to comply by the directions of an all-wise God, to us in his word, ver. 7.

That though the dealings of God with the earth may be dark and mysterious, yet to submit implicitly to his dispensations, for that they themselves shall hereafter see both his justice and their mercy, ver. 7.

That pride and self-conceit, and an undue endeavour at superiority over our brethren, concealed under the mask of an obtrusive humility, ver. 8.

That an ignorant and unenlightened humbly is an obstruction to the life of God in the soul; that we *deserve* nothing from God, but who refuse what the Almighty is pleased to offer; That submission to the will of God, and obedience to his commandments always accompany salvation; that we are saved; but faith without works is

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extremes, either falling short of their duty at one or exceeding in its exercise at another, ver. 9. Ill-worship has no share in promoting the holiness of the saints. Submission to the will of God, and constant continuance in those means of grace which are appointed by him, are the only path to peace, and holiness, and holiness, and heaven, ver. 10.

Though purity of communion in the church of Christ is very desirable, it is not to be expected in an imperfect state. In the best times it might be "Ye are clean, but not all," ver. 10.

God only knows the heart of man, we are never uncharitable in judging of the *motives* of our brethren, as separated from their actions, ver. 11.

We should endeavour to draw practical lessons, not only from what we read, but also from every circumstance of life, and dispensation of providence, ver. 12.

In our conduct and intercourse with our brethren, we ought always to be open and candid; and if any misunderstanding should happen which they do not understand, we should endeavour to explain it to them, ver. 12. Christians must be open and consistent in proving themselves to be the servants of Christ. They do so, "do well," ver. 13.

As Christ is our Lord and Master, our acknowledgment that he is so, should excite us to reverence his commands, and to be diligent in his service, ver. 13. Christ's condescension and kindness to us, should induce us diligent in watching for opportunities to be kind unto others, ver. 14.

In relating to temporal comforts, as well as bestowing temporal necessities, we ought to be included in the Christian's charity, ver. 14.

The history and conduct of Christ should be studied and followed, as a perfect example for our imitation, ver. 15.

The sense of Christ's glory and of our own unworthiness should induce us to diligence in the performance

ance of our duties, and to the exercise of humility in reflecting upon them, ver. 16.

That the happiness of the Christian lies, not so much in the extent of his knowledge, as in the use which he makes of it in the performance of his duty, ver. 17.

That knowledge is necessary to the performance of duty. Unless we know these things, we cannot reduce them to practice, ver. 17.

That knowledge is only a means to accomplish an end. *Knowing* our duties will be of little service, if we do not *perform* them, ver. 17.

That real happiness is always to be found in the discharge of religious duties, ver. 17.

SECTION XLV.

*Institution of the Lord's Supper.—Matt. xxvi.
26—30.*

See also Mark xiv. 22—25. and Luke xxii. 19—23.
and 1 Cor. xi. 23—25.

NARRATIVE.

AFTER washing his disciples' feet, and again informing them of his sufferings and death, our Lord openly declared to his disciples present, the treachery of Judas. (Matth. xxvi. 21—25. Mark xiv. 18—21. John xiii. 21—29.) and instituted the sacrament of the Supper, which forms the subject of the present section.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 26. What did Jesus take? When did he take bread? Who were eating? What did Jesus do to the bread after he had taken it? What did he do after he had blessed it? To whom did he give it? What did he bid them take? What were they to do with the bread? *What did he say the bread represented?*—27. What did he take next? What did he do when he took the cup? *To whom did he give it? What were they to do with*

what was in the cup? Who were to drink of it? Of what were they to drink?—28. *What did the wine in the cup represent?* Of what testament was his blood? For whom was his blood shed? For what was his blood shed?—29. Of what was Jesus not to drink? To whom did he say this? Where was he to drink? With whom was he to drink in his Father's kingdom?—30. *What did they sing?* Who sang the hymn? Whither did they go? When did they go to the Mount of Olives?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 26. *This is my body,* This bread is the sign, or representation, or symbol, of my body, which is to be broken for you.

Ver. 28. *This is my blood,* This wine is the sign, or representation of my blood, which is about to be shed for you, in the same manner as the bread is the sign of my body.—*New Testament,* The new will, or appointment of God; by which you, my disciples, are now to receive the pardon of sin, and to become possessed of your Father's inheritance in heaven.—*Shed,* Spilled, or poured out.—*Remission,* Forgiveness, or pardon.

Ver. 29. *Henceforth,* From this time forward.—*Father's Kingdom,* In the heavenly state, after my death and ascension to heaven:

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn,

That no social meeting of Christians should be allowed, if possible, to pass unimproved by useful conversation.—Even the time of meals may, by the pious and the prudent, be turned into a useful season for their mutual advantage and improvement, ver. 26.

That all our mercies, whether they be temporal or spiritual, should be received from God, not only with the internal *feelings* of gratitude, but also with the external *expressions* of it, ver. 26.

That as the commemoration of Christ's death is a positive command on the part of Christ, and not a matter of choice on the part of his people, every professing

Christian who neglects the observance of this ordinance, is either, by his own confession, no Christian, or he is disobeying an express commandment of God, ver. 26.

That as bread is the food and staff of the body, so Christ is the only sure support of spiritual life in the Christian. He alone has been given by God for the nourishment of the soul, ver. 26

That in the ordinance of the Supper, we ought not to confine our attention to the mere symbols which are used, but, through them to contemplate the broken body and shed blood of our blessed Redeemer, ver. 26, 27.

That in the gospel God has prepared for his people an abundant feast.—He has not only provided bread for the support of the soul, but wine for its comfort and refreshment, ver. 27.

That God has not only provided support for the soul while under sufferings, but has given us also what is necessary for its comfort in seasons of gratulation and gladness. As wine cheereth the heart, so the blessings of the gospel maketh the Christian leap for joy, ver. 27.

That the appearance of Christ upon earth, and his death and sufferings, are the close of the Old and the beginning of the New Testament dispensations, ver. 28.

That by means of the sufferings of Christ alone, pardon can be extended to the ungodly, ver. 28.

That if Christ died for sin, it should be our constant study to die unto sin. We should always hate that which made Christ suffer, ver. 28.

That Christ died, not for himself, but for the sins of his people. His blood was shed for the salvation of "many," ver. 28.

That as *all men* shall not be saved, it should be our earnest desire and constant endeavour to be among the "*many who shall be saved*," ver. 28.

That the opportunities of communion and fellowship which we enjoy with Christ upon earth, should lead

minds forward to the closer and more endearing fellowship which we shall enjoy in heaven, ver. 29. as there are a kingdom of glory, and a feast of joy prepared by Christ for his people after this life, they ought not to fret or repine at the few and momentary sufferings with which they may be visited upon earth, ver. 29.

As Christ has gone before his people to prepare for them a kingdom, we ought to consider ourselves citizens of heaven, and to walk and to act as strangers and pilgrims upon earth, ver. 29.

Praise, as well as prayer, is the duty of Christians, ver. 30.

Social meetings should always be improved and sanctified by the voice of gratitude and praise to the honour of all our comforts, ver. 30.

Retirement and secret devotion, after the solemn public or private exercises of religion, are not only useful but necessary, ver 30.

SECTION XLVI.

Christ's sufferings in the Garden.—Matt. xxvii. 36—46.

See Mark xiv. 32.—Luke xxii. 41.—John xviii. 3.

NARRATIVE.

BEFORE the institution of the Supper, our Lord removed the disciples, who were contending among themselves for the chief places in his kingdom, and foretold Peter of his temptation and fall, (Luke xxi. 24 John xiii. 31—38.) After this he delivered his story discourse, foretold the desertion of the disciples, the denial of Peter, and his own resurrection, ver. xxvi. 30—36. Mark xiv. 26—31. Luke xxi. 30 John xiv. 1—31.) discoursed to his disciples in the Mount of Olives, (John xv. 1—27. xvi. 1—33.) Prayed for them, (John xvi. 1—26.) and afterwards com-

ing down from the Mount went to the Garden of Gethsemane, which was situated at the foot of it, where he began to suffer those agonies of soul for our sins which are recorded in this section.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 36. Who came to Gethsemane? Who came with Jesus to Gethsemane? What did he bid them do? Who were to sit there? Whither was Jesus to go? What did he purpose doing there?—37. Whom did he take with him? Whose sons did he take with him? How many sons had Zebedee? What did Jesus begin to be?—38. What did he say was sorrowful? What kind of sorrow was this sorrow of soul? Unto what was this sorrow? Where did he bid them tarry? What did he bid them do? With whom were they to watch?—39. Whither did Jesus go? On what did he fall? What did he do when he fell on his face? To whom did he pray? *What did he desire might pass from him?* Whose will did he desire to submit to?—40. To whom did he then come? In what state did he find them? To whom did he speak? What had he wished them to do? For what period did he expect they would have watched?—41. *What were they now to do?* For what were they to watch and pray? What did he say was willing? What did he say of the flesh?—42. Who went away the second time? What did he do when he went away? What did he call God? What did he wish in regard to the cup of his sufferings? To whose will did he submit himself?—43. To whom did he again come? In what state did he now find them? What were heavy?—44. Whom did he leave? What did he do this third time? What words did he use?—45. Who came to his disciples? *What did he bid them do?* What might they now take? What was at hand? Who was betrayed? Into whose hands was he betrayed?—46. Whom did he desire to rise? What were they all to do? Who was at hand? Whom was he to betray?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 36. *Gethsemane*, A word signifying "the valley of fatness," and the name of a garden at the foot of the Mount of Olives, where Christ and his disciples used frequently to retire for devotion, refreshment, and rest.

37. *Sorrowful and very heavy*, Under extreme dejection and anguish of mind.

38. *Tarry*, Abide, or stop.—*Watch with me*, Be upon your guard, and keep yourselves awake to assist and comfort me.

39. *If it be possible*, If it can by any means be done, and yet mankind be saved.—*This cup*, These sufferings; sufferings being frequently compared to a bitter potion in a cup, which individuals were compelled to drink.

41. *Temptation*, A state of trial, or strong inducement to commit sin.—*The spirit*, The soul renewed by grace.—*The flesh*, The body, the corrupt nature, the propensities of which, though by the grace of God they are kept under and gradually subdued, are yet completely extirpated only at death.

45. *The hour is at hand*, The time appointed by God for my sufferings and death.—*Son of Man*, Jesus the Saviour, so called to mark his human nature, he being God as well as man.—*Betrayed*, His place of concealment discovered and he delivered up to his enemies by a pretended friend.

LESSONS.

From this section we learn,

That the company and fellowship of Christians with each other, in times of difficulty and trial, are both their privilege and their duty, ver. 36.

That it is proper to study and to chuse both the time and the place where our devotions ought to be performed. Christ remained not in the house, but chose the seclusion of Gethsemane and the darkness of night, for the spot and the season of his agony and suffering, ver. 36.

That our attention should never be so much taken up

with our own trouble, as to make us altogether neglect the comfort of others, ver. 36.

That secret prayer is at once the privilege and the duty of Christians. If Christ, who had *all things of himself*, retired for supplication and prayer, how much more should we do so, who of ourselves have nothing! ver. 36.

That though it is our duty to love and respect all the people of God, yet it is both lawful and proper, to make a selection of one or more, for the purposes of more intimate and close fellowship in friendship and devotion, ver. 37.

That the friendship of Christians, is sometimes as conspicuous in making us witnesses, or even partakers of their sorrows, as in making us participate of their honours and joys, ver. 37.

That in every time of darkness and trial, the presence of Christian friends is desirable, and should be sought, in order that we may be soothed by their sympathy, excited by their exhortations, or strengthened by their prayers, ver. 37.

That sin is exceedingly sinful. If Jesus, the Son of God, though holy, and harmless, and without offence, was on its account "smitten, stricken, and afflicted," it must be exceedingly offensive to God, and ought always to be hated and avoided by us, ver. 38.

That Christians ought not to avoid, but should visit and sympathise with one another in affliction. If our Lord hoped to find comfort and relief in his sorrows from the prayer and the presence of the godly whom he loved, so also may his followers in every case where the Lord is pleased to lay his hand upon them, ver. 38.

That Christians have no share in making an atonement for their own sins.—Christ at all former times associated with his apostles, but when the penalty of sin was laid upon him, he had to bear it alone, ver. 38.

That secret and ejaculatory prayer should always be joined with social and public prayer.—Though our Lord requested the prayers of his three apostles, yet

he addressed God also for himself ; as, in his present experience, he had sufferings in which they could have no fellowship, ver. 39.

That particular postures in devotion, not being necessary for the right performance of our duty, ought never to be made a matter of conscience with Christians.—The posture which best expresses the state of the worshipper's mind, may in general be considered the most appropriate, ver. 39.

That in our heaviest afflictions we ought never to lose sight of God, as our kind and heavenly Father.—He may afflict, but it is not willingly ; and we shall at last find, that our severest trials were necessary, and have all tended to our spiritual good, ver. 39.

That it is not only lawful, but it is also our duty, to seek relief from distress and trouble, and to use all proper and lawful means for that purpose, provided we do so in subserviency to the will and appointment of God, ver. 39.

That all our desires, as well as our endeavours for relief from trouble should be regulated in humble submission to the infinitely wise and gracious disposals of our heavenly Father, ver. 39.

That since God so loved sinners, as for their sakes to bruise his only begotten and well-beloved Son, and refused to remove the cup from him which was to secure salvation for them, all those who come unto God by him have thus the strongest assurance of acceptance and eternal life, ver. 39.

That as God is a better judge of what is good for us than we can be ourselves, we ought not only cheerfully to submit to his will, but to be thankful for that care and discipline by which he is doing us good, ver. 39.

That if God would remit the sufferings of his well beloved Son, when sin was *imputed* to him, how much more will he refuse to extend his mercy to impenitent sinners, who have not only sinned in person, but have refused his offered mercy and despised his *patient forbearance*, ver. 39.

That indifference to the trials and sufferings of our brethren is not only improper, but criminal. When the Lord visits his children with affliction, we ought to consider ourselves privileged by having an opportunity of shewing our love to our Saviour, by helping his servants, ver. 40.

That they who are most loud in their professions should be most careful of their conduct. Peter had been most forward in declaring his attachment to his Lord, and he is the first whose failings are observed and rebuked, ver. 40.

That evil example, even in our brethren, is contagious and dangerous. Each of the three apostles, one after another, followed the example of his neighbour, till all were asleep, ver. 40.

That lukewarmness and backsliding, in those whose mercies have been many, and whose privileges are peculiarly great, occasion surprise and regret to all God's people. "What! could ye not watch with me!" ver. 40.

That the lightness and ease of God's service will be a great aggravation of our sin, when this service is neglected. "What! could ye not watch with me *one hour!*" ver. 40.

That in the performance of every service appointed us by God, we ought to be diligent and watchful.—If the apostles of our Lord, in his immediate presence, fell asleep, how much should we be upon our guard lest we slumber in our duty, ver. 40.

That if we allow ourselves to neglect our duty, we may expect that our Lord will visit us with reproofs, ver. 40.

That we are not only to strive against sin, but we are also to watch and pray, that we may be kept even from temptations to it, ver. 41.

That constant watchfulness, as well as fervent prayer, is necessary to make us avoid and resist temptations, ver. 41.

That the neglect of devotional exercises, or carelessness

in it, is generally the forerunner of Satan's hottest and most successful temptations, ver. 41.

That the weakness of the flesh, since it is the strongest possible motive to exertion and watchfulness, is an aggravation, rather than an excuse, for indifference and sloth, ver. 41.

That in conducting devotional exercises, great prudence ought to be exercised in regard to their continuance. The spirit of many, even of enquiring souls, "may be willing," while from youth, or fatigue, or even from former habits, the "flesh may be weak."—When weariness or languor strengthens in the mind, spiritual worship is in the same proportion weakened and destroyed, ver. 41.

That we ought to be faithful to the souls of our Christian brethren, in pointing out their weaknesses and failings, as a motive to diligence and watchfulness in their duty, ver. 41.

That it is the duty of Christians to put the most charitable construction on the conduct of their brethren, which their actions, taken in connexion with their general conduct, will allow, ver. 41.

That perfection in duty, as well as in happiness, is reserved for the enjoyment of heaven. The spirit, though "willing," must in some measure partake, while on earth, of the "weakness" of the flesh, ver. 41.

That when our petitions are agreeable to the Word of God, and are warranted by it, the delay of an answer ought not to discourage us in renewing and reiterating them at the throne of grace, ver. 42.

That as things, really good in themselves, may, if attained at that particular time, prove detrimental to the Christian, all his petitions should be offered up in sincere and humble submission to the wise and merciful disposal of God, ver. 42.

That the afflictions of God's people are to be considered as instances of his fatherly care and love, and not of hatred or ill-will. The cup presented may be bitter,

but it is offered by the hand of a kind and merciful Father, ver. 42.

That we ought to exercise much patience and forbearance towards the weakness of our brethren and friends, ver. 43

That all reiteration of our petitions to God in prayer is not vain repetition. When the heart is earnestly set on a lawful and desirable object, we may again and again renew our requests, although they be clothed in the same words, ver. 44.

That the best antidote for grief caused by the absence, impotence, or lukewarmness of our friends, is prayer to God. He is at all times "a Friend who sticketh closer than a brother," and "who slumbereth not nor sleepeth," ver. 44.

That they who will not be active in the service of God, at the call of duty and gratitude, may expect to be roused by the less delicate, but more powerful voice of affliction, ver. 45.

That falsehood consists, not so much in the form of the expressions used, as in the intention of the speaker to deceive. Words in themselves true, when spoken in a certain manner, and with a design to be misunderstood, become falsehood and sin, while ironical sentences, when sufficiently plain, are often properly used for the purpose of conveying truth in a more pointed and forcible manner, ver. 45.

That when dangers or difficulties to ourselves and our Christian brethren are expected or foreseen, it is our duty to point out and warn them of the circumstance, ver. 45.

That troubles or afflictions sent or permitted by God, to be visited upon his people, are always aggravated when wicked men are the immediate instruments employed, ver. 45.

That a time of danger should be a time of activity and circumspection to the people of God, ver. 46.

That good advice should always be accompanied by good example. Our command should not be, "Go ye,"

but rather as our Lord is here, "Let us be going," ver. 46.

But false friends are to be avoided as cautiously as open enemies, ver. 46.

But though our sins are great, and our defects and failings numerous and aggravated, yet our Lord still waits to be gracious and continues to invite us to arise, and flee from the wrath to come, ver. 46.

But if at any time temptation or sin should have been permitted to have dominion over us; yet if we now hear our Master's voice, and arise and follow him, he will redeem us from death, and deliver us from the snares of the wicked one, ver. 46.

SECTION XLVII.

Christ is Apprehended.—Matth. xxvi. 47—56.

See also Mark xiv. 43. Luke xxii. 47. and John xviii. 3.

NARRATIVE.

WHILE our Lord was in the garden, Judas, who knew where he was to be found, having received band of men from the Chief Priests, came with them to Gethsemane, and delivered Jesus into their hands. After seeing his Lord surrounded by armed men, drew his sword and smote one of the High Priest's servants, and cut off his ear, which Jesus immediately healed.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 47. *Who came while Jesus was speaking?* Who was Judas? Who were with him? What had the multitude? From whom did this multitude come?—48. *Who gave the multitude a sign? What sign did he give them? What was he to do to the person whom he was to betray? What were they to do with the person whom he should kiss?—49. What did Judas do? What did he say? Whom did he kiss?—50. What did Jesus call him?*

What did he ask him? What did the multitude do Jesus? Who took him?—51. Who stretched out his hand? For what did he stretch out his hand? What did he do with his sword? Whose servant did he strike? What was the consequence of this stroke with the sword?—52. *What did Jesus bid Peter do?* What was he to put up in its place? Who will perish with the sword?—53. To whom could he have prayed? What could he have received? From whom would he have received them?—54. Why did he not ask for the angel? What must be fulfilled? What was to fulfil the Scriptures?—55. Who spoke to the multitude? When did he speak to the multitude? As against what had they come out? With what had they come out? For what purpose had they come out? Where had he sat with them? What did he do in the temple? How often did he teach in the temple? What did they not do when he was in the temple?—56. *For what was all this done?* What Scriptures were thus fulfilled? Who was forsaken? Who forsook him? What did the disciples do when they had forsaken him.

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 47. *One of the twelve*, One of the twelve disciples, commonly called Apostles, whom Jesus had chosen to be constantly with him.—*Staves*, Long walking sticks, used as weapons.

49. *Forthwith*, Immediately.—*Hail*, Used as a salutation, meaning “health,” or “welcome.”

53. *Presently*, Immediately.—*Legions*, The Roman legion consisted of about 6,000 individuals; and is here used to denote a very great number of angels.

54. *The Scriptures be fulfilled*, How shall the circumstances foretold in the Old Testament take place.

56. *Forsook him*, Left him.—*Fled*, Ran away.

LESSONS.

From this Section we Learn

That no view of danger to ourselves should deter us from our duty, in endeavouring to benefit or assist

others.—Christ was well aware of the approach of his murderers, yet as he knew his hour was come, he not only submitted to their force, but employed the last moments of his freedom in warning and encouraging his disciples, ver. 47.

That no profession of religion, however great, should lead us to put confidence in our own strength. Judas, outwardly a disciple, one of the twelve, and chosen by Christ himself, though he made a fair profession before men, was yet a hypocrite and a traitor. Let us not be high minded, but fear, ver. 47.

That as there is no place so secluded, and no duty so solemn as to prevent the intrusion of our spiritual enemies, we ought to be constantly on our guard. As the privacy of Gethsemane was betrayed by a false friend, and successfully entered by a merciless enemy, so the hearts of God's own people are often betrayed by their evil inclinations, and laid open to the successful attacks of the devil, the world, and the flesh, ver. 47.

That in spiritual matters, we ought to own no authority but that of God. The multitude, by adopting the opinions, and following the directions of the chief priests and elders, were tempted first to apprehend Christ, and afterwards to assist at his crucifixion, ver. 47.

That false friends are commonly the most inveterate, as well as the most dangerous of our enemies.—Judas not only permitted the approach of Christ's enemies, but stimulated them to acts of severity, and violence. "Hold him fast," ver. 48.

That friendly professions by the wicked towards God's people, ought always to be received with caution and followed by watchfulness —When they kiss, it is too often to betray, ver. 48.

That men may not only know Christ themselves, but may even point Him out to others, while they are in their hearts betrayers and murderers, ver. 48.

That all those who make a gain of godliness, who sell their privileges, and turn their solemn duties into

means of profit, are but hypocrites and betrayers.—The salutation of Judas, which was at once the signal of his privilege and his treachery, was sold for thirty pieces of silver, ver. 48.

That hypocrites, and the false friends of Christ, are often more shewy in their forms of devotion, and more loud in their professions of attachment, than the true Christian, ver. 49.

That mere outward professions of attachment to Christ and his cause, are no infallible signs of true conversion.—Judas could welcome Christ; and, while he kissed, betrayed him, ver. 49.

That we ought never to judge of ourselves, or others, by a few occasional works of piety, or outward acts of devotion.—The habitual dispositions of the mind, the constant mortification of sin, and the general tenor of a holy life, are the best, if not the only evidences of a saving change of heart. “By their fruits ye shall know them,” ver. 49.

That it is the Christian's duty to act with meekness and forbearance in every case of insult, cruelty, or oppression. In this manner, our Lord met even the duplicity and treachery of a pretended friend, ver. 50.

That common appellations of civility are not only no infringement of truth, but may even be lawful and proper, ver. 50.

That great caution must be used in judging of the motives upon which other people act.—Even Christ, who knew the treachery of Judas, has set us the example of calling a man friend, till he has sufficiently shewn himself to be our enemy, ver. 50.

That enquiry may be proper, even when no satisfactory answer is expected.—Though Christ knew the heart of Judas, and the circumstances of his treachery, we, not being so gifted, must use the means of investigation, before we decide on the criminality of others, ver. 50.

That the backsliding and treachery of Christ's friends are often the cause of inspiring his enemies with greater boldness, hatred, and oppression, ver. 50.

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That the success of Satan, in making us neglect one duty, will frequently be followed by a temptation of an opposite kind,—namely, by inducing us to make up the neglect, by doing more than is either expedient or lawful, ver. 51.

That it is easier sometimes boldly to fight for the cause of Christ, than patiently to suffer for it.—Many there are who would glory in public active resistance, who would shrink from patient private endurance, ver. 51.

That while we are never to be lukewarm, or indifferent in the cause of Christ, we are, at the same time, never to be suddenly driven from the calm exercises of reason, or hurried into conduct which is either imprudent or rash.—The Christians are in patience to possess their souls; and while they are “to be wise as serpents, they must also be harmless as doves,” ver. 51.

That though masters will be responsible for the unjust or wicked commands given to their servants, yet servants will also have to account to God for executing them. “We must obey God rather than men,” ver. 51.

That they who execute the ungodly commands of others, will also be partakers in their guilt and their punishment, ver. 51.

That when we are unable to prevent sin, we ought to do what we can to oppose its progress, and to remedy its evils, ver. 52.

That we ought not only to cease from sin, but also to remove every thing which might tempt us to persevere in it, ver. 52.

That the Christian religion is not a system of carnal and worldly policy, but a spiritual and heavenly ordinance of God, for the renovation and eternal happiness of men, ver. 52.

That the spread of Christianity is never to be attempted by force of arms, but by the influence of the truth, and the power of the Spirit of God, ver. 52.

That they whose religion is only of this world, and who use it only to promote their temporal interests, must at last perish with the world, ver. 52.

he has given us, in observing the dispensat
providence, and in declining to ask what he
ly shewn would be improper for him to gran
That though forms of prayer may be carefully
the devout Christian will not confine himse

Our petitions and our thanksgivings must
plied or varied according to our circumstanc
That delay on the part of God to assist his pe
result of his wisdom and goodness, and doe
from want of ability, or from want of will,

That though God will withhold no good from
ple, yet that it is his will that they should
it, "Of these things will I be enquired of,"

That the power of God for the protection of
is unlimited.—If one angel destroyed all th
the Assyrians, what might not be accom
twelve legions, ver. 53.

That the angels are appointed by God as the s
Christ and his church; they are "ministeri
sent forth to minister unto them who shal
of salvation," ver. 53.

That every circumstance in our lot is under t
direction of God Almighty. All that he ha
to be for his own glory and for the good of

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That if punishment does not always consist in mere corporal chastisement, we must be careful, never wilfully to wound the reputation or feelings of any one, without a just or a proper cause, ver. 55.

That expostulation with those who are about to injure us, is not only proper on our own account, but also on theirs, ver. 55.

That it is the duty of the Christian in his own defence to plead his former good character, and the confession of his enemies regarding it, ver. 55.

That we ought to make ourselves acquainted with the Scriptures of the Old Testament, as they all have a reference to the New. The coming of the Messiah, and his person and work, were the great truths which the prophets of old made known to the people of God, ver. 56.

That as the want or the weakness of faith in the divine presence and help, is the great cause of fear and defection, we ought in times of prosperity, constantly to exercise ourselves in an implicit trust in God, that we may be better prepared for times of trial and temptation, ver. 56.

That an evil example in one may be dangerous to many. Some one of our Lord's disciples first fled, and the rest, unsupported by their brethren, immediately followed, ver. 56.

SECTION XLVIII.

Peter denies Christ.—Luke xxii. 54—62.

See also Matth. xxvi. 69.—Mark xiv. 66. and John xviii. 17.

NARRATIVE.

WHEN our Lord was apprehended, and all the disciples had forsaken him and fled, Peter followed at a distance, and got entrance into the high priest's

palace, where being questioned as to his being with Christ, he denied that he knew him; being a second time questioned, he again more earnestly denied him; and upon the question being put a third time, he began to curse and to swear, and affirmed with an oath, that he knew not the man. At this moment, our Lord, who was within sight of Peter turned and looked upon him; when Peter, perceiving the greatness of his sin, was struck with remorse, and went out, and wept bitterly.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 54. Whom did the multitude take? What did they do with him? Whither did they bring him? Who followed? How did Peter follow?—55. What did they do in the hall? In what part of the hall did they kindle the fire? What did they do when they had kindled the fire? *Whoseat down among them?*—56. Where was Peter? By what was he sitting? Who beheld Peter? In what manner did she look upon him? What did she say? With whom did she say Peter had been?—57. Who denied Christ? Whom did Peter deny? To whom did he speak? Whom did he not know?—58. Who else saw Peter? When did this other servant see him? Of whom did the servant say he was one? What did Peter say to him?—59. Who affirmed that Peter had been with Jesus? When did this other servant affirm this? What did this servant call Peter? What countryman did he say he was?—60. What answer did Peter make to this? What did Peter say he did not know? What happened while he was speaking? When did the cock crow?—61. Who turned? What did the Lord do when he turned? *Upon whom did our Lord look?* What did Peter remember? Who had foretold his denying him? How often was he to deny him? Before what was he to deny him?—62. Who went out? *What did Peter do when he went out?* In what manner did he weep?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 54. *A far off.* At a distance.

l, A young woman.—*Beheld him*, Saw him.
 , With deep interest and attention.
boldly affirmed, Boldly and positively said
 ned.—*Galilean*, One who, by his speech, ap-
 ave come from Galilee.
instantly, At the time he spake.
 t, Cried, by shedding tears.—*Bitterly*, With
 and remorse.

LESSONS.

his Section we learn,
 ivantages at any time gained over the peo-
 d, give the wicked no cause of gratulation or
 —The greater their apparent success now,
 the greater will be their disgrace and defeat
 , ver. 54.
 enemies of God and his church will feel more
 e, and have more success in their opposition
 use, when the ministers of religion connive
 ist them in, their persecutions, ver. 54.
 pinions and practices of the ministers of re-
 re only to be followed when these are in ac-
 with Scripture.—The high priests who ought
 known better, are found at the head of those
 cted and persecuted their Lord, ver. 54.
 gh surrounded on every side by dangerous
 we ought still to keep near to Christ, and
 im, though it should be “afar off,” ver. 54.
 from weakness or fear, we fail in our duty,
 t not to persevere in our fault, but instantly
 nk ourselves, return to Christ, and follow
 we can, although it may be at a distance,
 operate zeal is sometimes more dangerous in
 quences, than culpable neglect.—Peter, in-
 by fear, had formerly fled; and now by fol-
 he dictates of a mistaken courage, he falls
 ptation and sin, ver. 54.
 iations of ungodly men have a tendency to

make them bolder in their crimes, and more inveterate against God and his people, ver. 55.

That the company of the wicked is at all times dangerous, and ought to be avoided.—Peter, when he followed his Lord, ought not to have mingled with his enemies, and thus to have exposed himself to temptation, ver. 55.

That we ought to be constantly on our guard against the beginnings of sin.—Peter thought it was an innocent act to sit down with his Lord's enemies, and thus he was insensibly led into the commission of crime, ver. 55.

That the people of God are always easily distinguished, even when found in the company of the ungodly.—

They who have been much in the company of Christ, should shew by their conversation and conduct, wherever they are, that they have learnt of him, ver. 56.

That conformity to the world is in every respect disadvantageous and dangerous to the people of God.—By a complying conduct, they not only offend God, but are even despised and rejected by those wicked persons whose favour they seek, ver. 56.

That unless we receive strength and courage from God, we are at all times cowards, and in danger of falling.—Peter, who but a few hours before, thought himself willing to brave danger and death, is now found to be dismayed at the voice of a woman, ver. 57.

That we ought always to be on our guard against being surprised into sin.—Peter being suddenly questioned when off his guard, as suddenly fell, ver. 57.

That fear is a great hinderance to our making progress in the divine life.—The fear of man bringeth a snare; and he who is not content to part with his life for the sake of Christ is not worthy of him, ver. 57.

That in the field of temptation, flight is the believer's greatest safety.—Peter lingered in the scene of his former defeat, and again fell, ver. 58, 59.

That the disciples of Christ should always be known by their conversation, ver. 59.

That to the men of the world, religion is not only a

subject of contempt in itself, but its very profession is sufficient to excite contempt for all its adherents, ver. 59.

That a repetition of sin gives increased confidence in its commission.—Peter denied his Lord so repeatedly, that he at last affirmed that he was ignorant of what was meant by being the countryman of Christ, or the associate of his friends, ver. 60.

That the actions of men and animals are all under the controul of God, and can be overruled as he pleases to promote his purposes.—The cock crew at the precise time when its doing so was calculated to recal to the mind of Peter his Lord's prediction, ver. 60.

That our own distresses ought not so to occupy our attention as to lead us altogether to forget the good of others.—Though Christ himself was surrounded with affliction, he was not unmindful of his back-sliding apostle, ver. 61.

That the Lord's time for reproof and correction is always the best.—Had Christ looked upon Peter sooner, the effect, humanly speaking, might not have been produced ; but the cock crew, Christ turned, and Peter was convicted, ver. 61.

That the smitings of conscience should always make us look to the Saviour for mercy and pardon.—Peter, in the midst of his transgression, cast his eye to his Lord, whose look at the moment produced penitence and reform, ver. 61.

That the Lord will not finally leave his people to be destroyed by theunning or the malice of Satan.—Christ had prayed for Peter, and now a look from him is sufficient to make that prayer effectual, ver. 61.

That every circumstance of providence, as well as every means of grace, should lead us to remember the words of our Lord, whether they be for reproof, for correction, or for instruction in righteousness, ver. 61.

That every exhibition of the truth of the word of God, in our own weakness and sinfulness, should tend to deepen our humility and strengthen our faith, ver. 61.

That the first effort of the repenting sinner should be

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to get away from the scene of temptation.—Peter now found that he had lingered too long in the company of his Lord's enemies, whose first look, accordingly, banished him from them, ver. 62.

That convictions of sin should not be disregarded, but ought always to be promoted by serious reflection and retirement from the world, ver. 62.

That the tears of repentance are most profitable to the soul, when they are most bitter to the feelings.—By the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better, ver. 62.

SECTION XLIX.

Christ's Trial before Pilate.—Mat. xxvii. 11—26.

See also Mark xv. 1.—Luke xxiii. 1.
and John xviii. 28.

NARRATIVE.

AFTER Peter's denial, our Lord having been tried before the Jewish Council, (Matt. xxvi. 59—68. Mark xiv. 55—65. Luke xxii. 66—71. John xviii. 19—24.) was removed to the residence of Pilate the Roman governor; when Judas, struck with horror at the crime which he had committed, returned to the rulers, threw down the money which he had received from them, and went away, and in despair hanged himself. (Matt. xxvii. 1—10. Mark xv. 1. Luke xxiii. 1. John xviii. 28.) As soon as the Jews appeared before Pilate, they began bitterly to accuse Christ, and earnestly begged that he might be put to death; but Pilate finding that Christ was a Galilean, and of course belonged to the jurisdiction of Herod, sent him to that governor, who then happened to be at Jerusalem. (Matt. xxvii. 11—14. Mark xv. 2—5. Luke xxiii. 2—12. John xviii. 29—38.) Herod had, for a long time been anxious to see Jesus, and was therefore glad when he was brought, as he expected to see him perform some miracles; but as Christ would not speak to him, or answer any of his questions, he and his soldiers first subjected Christ to

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ridicule and mockery, and then, not be outdone by the courtesy of Pilate, again sent back Jesus to be tried by him. Pilate perceiving that the Jews could not substantiate their charges against Christ, and finding that he had done nothing that merited death, twice attempted to release him, and set him at liberty; but the violence of the Jews was so great, that he was obliged at last to comply with their demands. Accordingly, having first washed his hands, in token of his disapprobation of their conduct, and that he was free from the guilt of the murder, he then unjustly condemned him to death.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 11. Before whom did Jesus stand? What question did the governor ask him? Whose king did he enquire about? What answer did Jesus make?—12. By whom was Jesus accused? What did the chief priests and elders do regarding Jesus? What did Jesus do when he was thus accused?—13. Who asked if he heard these accusations? At whom did Pilate ask this? Against whom had they witnessed? What had they witnessed against Jesus?—14. To what did Jesus not answer? What effect had this on the governor? In what manner did he marvel?—15. What was wont to be released?—Who was wont to release a prisoner? When was the governor wont to release a prisoner? Unto whom was he wont to release a prisoner? Who made choice of the prisoner to be released?—16. What had they at this time? What was this prisoner's name? What sort of prisoner was Barabbas?—17. Who asked them which prisoner they wished to be released? At whom did Pilate ask this? When did Pilate ask this? Whom did he put in their choice? What did he say Jesus was called?—18. Why had the multitude delivered up Jesus to the governor? Who knew this? What had the multitude done from envy?—19. *Who sent unto Pilate? When did Pilate's wife send to him? With whom did she desire him to have nothing to do? What did she call Jesus? What did she say had happened? In what had she suffered many things? Because of whom had*

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she suffered many things ? When had she suffered those things in the dream.—20. What was done to the multitude ? Who persuaded the multitude ? What did they persuade the multitude to ask ? Whom did they persuade the multitude to destroy ?—21. Who answered them ? What did the governor ask ? Whom did they wish him to release ?—22. What did Pilate ask at them concerning Jesus ? What did the multitude wish him to do with Jesus ?—23. Who asked their reason for this ? What did he ask at them concerning Jesus ? What effect had this question upon them ? What did they say they wished done to Jesus ?—24. What did Pilate see ? What did the people make ? *What did Pilate take ? What did Pilate do with the water ? Before whom did he wash his hands ? Of what did he say he was innocent ? What did he call Jesus ? Who were to see to it ?*—25. Who answered to Pilate's declaration ? On whom did they desire the guilt of his blood to rest ?—26. Who was released ? Who released Barabbas ? Unto whom was Barabbas released ? *What did Pilate do unto Jesus ? Whom did Pilate deliver ? For what purpose was he delivered ?*

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 11. *Thou sayest*, It is as thou sayest.

14. *Inasmuch*, So that.—*Marvelled*, Was much surprised.

15. *Was wont*, Used.—*Whom they would*, Of whomsoever they made choice.

16. *Notable*, Remarkable.

21. *Twain*, Two.

22. *Crucified*, Put to death on a cross.

24. *Could prevail nothing*, Could not overcome their opposition.—*Tumult*,—Uproar, and confusion.

26. *Scourged*, Whipped.

LESSONS.

From this section we learn,

That submission to the civil authority, is the duty of the Christian. Christ, who was king of angels, and

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the Lord of glory, submitted to be judged by the wicked and unjust Pilate, ver. 11.

That all enquirers are not converts. Information may be required about Christ and his gospel, while there may be no desire to believe in the one, or to embrace the other, ver. 11.

That when cited before a court of justice, it is our duty to speak the truth. Christ condescended to answer the question which Pilate, in the discharge of his official duty, had asked him; doubtless, to teach us, that as it is proper in all judges to enquire concerning the accused, it is proper to answer their questions, ver. 11.

That a silent submission to the false accusations of our enemies, is in certain circumstances not only lawful, but may be necessary. When our very defence is likely to be used against us, we will appear less criminal, and our enemies less excusable, by a meek and patient endurance of wrong, ver. 12.

That the very patience and forbearance of the Christian under sufferings, are causes of greater irritation and hatred to his enemies, ver. 13.

That the guilt or innocence of individuals must never be estimated by the vehemence of the clamour made against them, or by the number or violence of their enemies and opponents, ver. 13.

That it is generally best for the Christian to leave unanswered all unsupported accusations. The Jews heaped upon Christ many charges; but as these were not supported by evidence, Christ did not reply, but left it to the judge to decide upon them, ver. 13.

That dignified silence is sometimes our best defence. Christ had answered Pilate before, because it was right to do so; but as this question did not bear upon the trial, he did not reply, ver. 14.

That the sentiments and conduct of the genuine Christian, often afford matter of surprise and astonishment to the men of the world, ver. 14.

That silence is not always an indication of guilt.—Prejudice, and clamour, and fear, on the part of our op-

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ponents, are sometimes best met by silence on ours, ver. 14.

That the estimation of rank, and the character adopted by the men of the have no influence in swaying our opinion himself was classed with a robber, who mation of the Jews, was afterwards pr him, ver. 17.

That no one should commit the judgment to the decision of his persecutors or ene ought to have judged for himself, an with decision, ver. 17.

That excellence of character and uprightness, as they are subjects of envy, w causes of persecution to the wicked and ver. 18.

That envy is progressive in its nature.—Indulged, it will carry us from mere seek the positive harm of our neighbour.

That envy in the wicked is frequently hatred and persecution towards the Chr

That every circumstance in providence is instrumental in encouraging us in our guarding us against sin, ver. 19.

That God can make even the wicked become to the wicked.—The fear of consequences speak louder, and be more readily than the fear of God, ver. 19.

That even the wicked will sometimes be acknowledge the righteousness and excellence of people, at the very time when they are them, ver. 19.

That the guilt of sin is aggravated by warnings of providence.—Pilate's guilt increased by his disregarding the in his wife, as well as the convictions of science, ver. 19.

That ministerial influence is peculiarly dangerous it is exerted against God, and in the ver. 20.

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That superiors and rulers ought to be cautious not to impose upon the common people, or to persuade them to do wrong.—The easiness with which most men are induced to do iniquity at the instigation of those whom they love and revere, should make every one anxious to stimulate them to do that which is good, and to prevent them from doing that which is evil, ver. 20.

That our estimate of character ought never to be influenced by the opinions of others, except in so far as these are sanctioned by the word of God, ver. 20.

That the favour of the wicked in many cases can only be gained by flagrant acts of injustice and sin, ver. 20.

That enmity to God and his cause, always tends to blind men to their true interests. The Jews released Barabbas who was a pest to their nation, and destroyed Jesus who had gone about continually doing them good, ver. 21.

That the enmity and the cruelty of the wicked are more inveterate against the piety and holiness of the saints, than against the sin and the wickedness of the world.

The robber and murderer is acquitted, but Christ must be crucified, ver. 22.

That yielding to the instigations of the wicked, will lead us from worse to worse. Pilate first gave ear to the unsupported accusations of the Jews, he was then led to accede to their choice of Barabbas, and at last was persuaded, contrary to the dictates of his own conscience, to condemn Christ, ver. 23.

That the extent of cruelty and injustice exhibited by persecutors, does sometimes become even surprising to themselves, ver. 23.

That violence must never be substituted for argument, nor bare assertions and clamour be allowed to injure the accused, ver. 23.

That even the wicked are sometimes alarmed at the consequences of that which they have helped to promote, ver. 24.

That clean hands must always be accompanied by a pure heart. Pilate's washing his hands from the consequences of his sin, while he was at the moment

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wilfully committing it, might make his injustice more apparent, but could not screen him from its guilt, ver. 24.

That it is useless to attempt an escape from the consequences of our own guilt, by endeavouring to throw the blame upon others. Pilate was not innocent because the Jews were clamorous, nor was his judgment right, because he was afraid to be just, ver. 24.

That godly parents are great blessings, and should excite gratitude to God in the hearts of their children. The imprecation of these ungodly Jews upon themselves and their children, has been awfully visited upon them; and its consequences are operating in frightful activity even at the present day, ver. 25.

That punishment will not be impartially administered till after death. Here the robber and murderer is acquitted, while the innocent Jesus is condemned; but in the world to come punishment will be in exact accordance with crime, ver. 26.

That worldly policy or personal fear, should never be allowed to oppose the dictates of conscience. Pilate was convinced of Christ's innocence; yet, for fear of political intrigue, or personal or family inconvenience, he released the guilty and condemned the innocent, ver. 26.

SECTION. L.

Christ crucified with Thieves.

Luke xxiii. 32—46.

See also Mat. xxvii. 31. Mark xv. 20, and John xix. 16.

NARRATIVE.

AFTER being condemned by Pilate, our Lord was scourged, crowned with thorns, and mocked by the soldiers; when Pilate again attempted to release him, but in vain, and accordingly delivered him to be crucified, (Matt. xxvii. 15—30. Mark xv. 6—18. Luke xxiii. 13—25. John xviii. 39, 40.; xix. 1—15.) Christ was then made to bear his cross, and led away, with

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two other malefactors, to Mount Calvary, where he was nailed to the tree, placed betwixt the two thieves, and reviled and mocked by the unfeeling Jews, (Matt. xxvii. 31—44. Mark xv. 20—32. Luke xxiii. 26—43. John xix. 16—24.) One of the malefactors also reviled him; but the other rebuked his companion, acknowledged his own sin and Christ's innocence, entreated Christ to have mercy upon him, and received a promise from Christ that he would that day be admitted with him into heaven.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 32. How many were led with Jesus to be put to death? What were those two individuals said to be? With whom were they led? To what were they led?—33. To what place did they come? What did they do with Jesus at Calvary? *Who else were crucified at Calvary?* Where were the crosses of the two malefactors placed?—34. To whom did Jesus pray? For whom did he pray? What did Jesus pray that God might do? What did he plead in their excuse? What did they part? Who parted his raiment? What else did they do?—35. Who stood beholding? Who were with the people beholding? What did the rulers do to Jesus? What did they say he had done to others? What did they desire him to do for himself? What did they say he had professed to be?—36. What did the soldiers do to him? What did they offer him?—37. What did the soldiers bid him do? What did they say he had professed to be?—38. What was written? Where was this superscription written? In what languages was this written? What did the superscription say he was? Whose king was he?—39. What did one of the malefactors do? What did the malefactor say to him?—40. What did the other malefactor do? Whom did the other malefactor rebuke? What did he ask him about God? What did he say he was in?—41. Who did he say were justly punished? What did he say they received? What did he say Jesus had done?—42. *Whom did he ask to remember him? What did*

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he call Jesus? When did he ask Jesus to remember him?—43. Who answered him? Where did Jesus say the malefactor would be? With whom would he be in Paradise? When was he to be in Paradise?—44. What was over all the earth? At what hour was this darkness over all the earth? Till when did this darkness continue?—45. What happened to the sun? What happened to the veil of the temple? Where was the veil rent?—46. Who cried? In what manner did Jesus cry? To whom did he cry? What did he cry? What did he do when he had cried?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 32. *Malefactors*, Evil-doers; persons condemned for breaking the laws of their country.

33. *Crucified him*, Put him to death by nailing him to a cross.

34. *Parted his raiment*, Divided his clothes.—*Cast lots*, Used some means of chance to determine to whom part of his clothes should belong.

35. *Derided him*, Laughed at, and mocked him.

38. *Superscription*, A writing placed over, or above any thing.

39. *Railed on him*, Insulted him with scornful language.

40. *Rebuked him*, Blamed him for his conduct.

43. *Verily*, Truly.—*Paradise*, Heaven.

44. *Sixth hour*, Twelve o'clock, mid-day.—*Ninth hour*, Three o'clock afternoon.

45. *Veil of the Temple*, The curtain which inclosed and concealed the Holy of Holies.

46. *Gave up the ghost*, Died

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn,

That similarity of punishment in this world, does not imply similarity of guilt.—Christ suffered the same punishment as transgressors, although he was altogether without any sin of his own, ver. 32.

That the most innocent is often, in the estimation of

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the world, considered the most guilty.—Christ himself was crucified between the thieves, indicating that he was regarded as worse than either, ver. 33.

That we should especially seek the favour and approbation of God, and prefer it to the favour and approbation of men.—God cannot be deceived, and will not condemn the innocent, which men often do.—Christ Jesus was, at his death, ranked with the wicked, and his followers must not be discouraged if they are treated in a similar manner, ver. 33.

That the exercise of a forgiving disposition, in the midst of gross injuries, is the duty of the followers of Christ, ver. 34.

That true and genuine forgiveness of injuries is best evinced, by judging charitably of the motives of the offenders, though their conduct must be condemned, ver. 34.

That ignorance is generally the parent of persecution.—They who now oppose God, and vilify and abuse his people, “know not in truth what they do,” ver. 34.

That Christ is the mediator between God and sinners.—If Christ prayed for his murderers, how much more will he intercede in behalf of his own people, ver. 34.

That worldly men are blind to every thing about Christ and his cause, except what tends to promote their temporal good.—Christ’s clothes excited more interest in his executioners than his sufferings; and they were more anxious to cast lots about his garment, than to have their sins forgiven, or to secure an interest in his salvation, ver. 34.

That many may contemplate the sufferings of Christ, without having any adequate idea of their nature or value.—It is one thing to say, “Christ died,” and another to be able to say, “He died for me,” ver. 35.

That ignorance of the good man’s intentions often makes wicked men revile religion.—The Jews did not understand the end for which Christ was meekly submitting to suffering, and therefore they lifted up their voices in reproach against him, ver. 35.

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That we ought not to be discouraged if, in the pursuance of a meek and humble conduct, we are met by the sneers and the ridicule of the ungodly.—Christ Jesus, when he bowed himself to the dust of death; was an object of derision to the wicked; and if he was thus abused by sinners, his followers, in sharing the same treatment have an evidence, that they are not of this world, ver. 35.

That gratitude is not to be expected from the men of the world. Christ's doing good and saving others, were not only unrewarded by men; but were even made the subject of their mockery and reproach, ver. 35.

That our opinion as to what would be sufficient to convince the determined sinner of the truth of revelation is very deceitful.—The Jews had seen Christ perform greater miracles than if he had come down from the cross, and yet would not believe, ver. 35.

That the insinuations of the wicked should never induce the good man to do any thing inconsistent with the will of God.—Christ was reviled, and his mission denied, but he did not, in order to satisfy them, act contrary to the divine purpose, ver. 35.

That the evil example of ministers and teachers is very destructive to the souls of others.—The chief priests and elders mocked, and the soldiers were soon induced to follow their example, ver. 36.

That sinners often mock and blaspheme at those very circumstances in the providence of God, which should call forth their highest praise.—The humiliation and death of Christ, instead of being a theme of ridicule to the wicked, should have excited their profoundest admiration and love, ver. 36.

That persecution is contagious.—They who can look with indifference on the unmerited sufferings of the godly, will not be long until they assist in increasing them, ver. 36.

That the wicked often unknowingly fulfil the predictions of God.—The soldiers gave Christ vinegar to

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drink, and thus gave an additional proof of the truth of the prophecy of God, ver. 36.

That when the ungodly take into their lips the titles of Christ, it is generally in order to hold them up to ridicule and contempt, ver. 37.

That the actings of God are often at variance with the ideas of men.—If Christ had saved himself according to the notions of his revilers, he would have extinguished for ever the hopes of the sinner, ver. 37.

That God often most effectually promotes his purposes by means which seem to men the most unlikely to bring them about.—Christ, by dying upon the cross, demonstrated that he was indeed “the king of the Jews;” whereas, had he come down from the cross he would have forfeited that title, ver. 37.

That bad men may, for bad purposes, confess the truth, and circulate it among others, ver. 38.

That impenitent sinners are always more taken up with the deficiencies of others, than with their own sins, ver. 39.

That the hardened sinner is always more anxious about his temporal relief than his spiritual safety; and forgets God and his former crimes, in an undue concern about his present sufferings, ver. 39.

That true repentance will exhibit itself, not only in abstaining from sin, but in preventing and reproving it in others, ver. 40.

That the fear of God, while it opens our eyes to our own sins, will make us also charitable in judging of others, ver. 40.

That we should be more concerned to search for and amend our own faults, than to pry into those of others, ver. 40.

That true penitence will be exercised upon the defilement and pollution of sin, as well as upon its consequences.—The penitent thief, feeling that his punishment was just, bore it with patience; while a sense of the evil of sin induced him, at the same time, to rebuke his companion, and to supplicate for mercy, ver. 41.

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That confession of sin, and humble subjection to its consequences, are constant accompaniments of true repentance.—We, in our worst circumstances, “only receive the due reward of our deeds,” ver. 41.

That whenever we have an opportunity, we ought to exonerate the character of others from unjust charges. “This man hath done nothing amiss,” ver. 41.

That a believing view of Christ’s sufferings always excites repentant feelings in the mind, and deep contrition for sins committed.—“We suffer justly; but this man hath done nothing amiss,” ver. 41.

That the hour of death should be a time of prayer.—The thief’s time was but short, and he endeavoured to improve it by instant and earnest application to the Saviour for pardon, ver. 42.

That though God cannot forget his saints, yet it is their duty, by prayer, to put him in remembrance of his promises, and to plead their fulfilment, ver. 42.

That neither Christ’s kingdom, nor the inheritance of his saints, is to be found in this life.—Let us live above the world, and look beyond it, for that rest which remaineth for the people of God, ver. 42.

That the souls of men, immediately after death, pass into a state of conscious happiness, or misery, ver. 42.

That the close of the believer’s life is the termination of his sufferings.—The day of his death may be a day of privation and pain,—but it will be the last; for on that day he shall be with his Lord in glory, ver. 43.

That the cry of faith will be heard even in the last hour of life.—This poor malefactor had no sooner entreated Christ for mercy, than he was answered, “To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise,” ver. 43.

That the dark dispensations of Providence can only be judged of through the medium of faith.—In that hour of horror and darkness was the justice of God satisfied, and man redeemed, ver. 44.

That every thing in nature is subject to divine controul.—God can, when he pleases, suspend the laws of nature, and thus make them testify, that there is God who supports the world, ver. 44, 45.

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—12. Who assembled with the elders? What did they take? What did they give to the soldiers? Who gave large money to the soldiers?—13. Who were they to say came by night? *What were they to say the disciples did? Whom were they to say the disciples stole away?* What were the guards to say of themselves?—14. What were they to do to the governor? On what account were they to persuade the governor? Whom were they to secure? Against whom were they to secure them?—15. What did the soldiers take? From whom did they take the money? What did they do when they had taken the money? What was commonly reported? Among whom was that saying reported? Until when was this saying reported?

LESSONS.

That we ought to be careful to keep the Sabbath-day.

—It was not till the “end of the Sabbath,” that these pious women would allow themselves to visit the tomb of their Lord, ver. 1.

That there should be no unnecessary delay in the discharge of our duties.—The women waited till the end of the Sabbath; but when that was past, they took the early dawn of the morning to wait on their Lord, ver. 1.

That one class of duties must not interfere with the performance of others.—The duties of the Sabbath, as required by God, were first attended to, and not till then did the women visit the sepulchre, ver. 1.

That duties plainly enjoined upon us by God, must always be preferred to those which are only incidental, and which can admit of delay.—The observance of the Sabbath was a duty specially commanded; their visit to the sepulchre was not so, ver. 1.

That Christians ought to encourage and assist each other in their works of faith, and labours of love, ver. 1.

That fear of circumstances, or doubts of success, should never prevent our attempting the performance of known and present duty. The women knew of the stone at the door of the sepulchre, which they could

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not roll away, but they did not remain at home at that account, but doing what they had in their power, by going to "see the sepulchre," they left the rest to the disposal of Providence, ver. 1.

That the most terrible convulsions of nature, and overwhelming circumstances of Providence, frequently conceal dispensations of kindness and mercy, ver. 2.

That the same circumstances of God's providence, which cause terror to his enemies, occasion joy and triumph to the saints, ver. 2.

That the atonement of Christ was accepted by the Father. When Christ had paid the penalty to the utmost, then did God, for the purpose of shewing to men and angels that his justice was satisfied, send down his angel to open the prison doors of the grave and to let the captive go free, ver. 2.

That every purpose of God shall assuredly be accomplished, either by the combination of ordinary means or by the application of extraordinary power. Whether the impediments of the seal, and the watch, and the stone at the sepulchre, could not be overcome by the women or the disciples, an angel was dispatched from heaven to remove them, ver. 2.

That the successful removal of impediments to the divine life, always affords rest and refreshment to the renewed soul. The stone which had shut up the sepulchre, becomes, when rolled away, a convenient seat for witnessing the final victory of Christ over death, which he was to accomplish by his resurrection from the dead, ver. 2.

That there is great mercy, as well as much wisdom, in the ordinary means of grace. Angels though messengers of love, are terrible even to the Lord's own people; and we have cause of gratitude, that the promulgation of the gospel has been committed to our fellow men, whose "terror maketh not afraid," ver. 3.

That the true servants and messengers of God, should always be pure in their personal holiness, as well as terri-

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delegated power. The angel's face "was like
g, and his raiment was white as snow," ver. 3.
oasted fortitude of the ungodly in their present
on to God, is but a specious delusion, founded
ance, and superficially propped up and main-
ly by their pride. If the *soldiers*, to whom ter-
generally a stranger ;—the *Roman soldiers*, to
be slightest indication of fear was disgrace,—
principled Roman soldiers, who could sell false-
money,—the *hardened Roman soldiers*, who
n a few hours, overcome and brave the terrors
own consciences,—the *blind*, the *reckless*, and
ing Roman soldiers, who could disregard the
ure of their superiors, and risk even life for
of lucre ;—if such men *trembled* and became
men at the presence of a messenger—*one*
ger of the Lord Jesus Christ ; how will the
ardened sinners be able to stand before the
own uncreated and terrible glory, when sur-
d by thousands and millions of his saints and
ver. 4.

people of God have, in the performance of
uty, no cause to fear the displeasure of the
y. "The wrath of men he maketh to praise
nd the remainder thereof he doth restrain."
ary sight of his messenger can unnerve the
f his enemies, and make them become as "dead
ver. 4.

every dispensation of providence, there is, with
to the intention of God, a marked distinction
t his own people and the men of the world.—
h, in outward appearance, "all things happen
o all," yet the uniform language of God to
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re we speak peace to the sinner, we should
be certain, that he is seeking Christ in sin-
—The angel calmed the fears of the women,
oke comfort to their souls, because he *knew*
ey sought Christ who was crucified, ver. 5.
rist Jesus should always be pointed out to sin-

ners, as a crucified Saviour.—It is only by viewing him in this capacity that any one can obtain peace of mind, and be enabled to say, “he bore my sins in his own body on the tree,” ver. 5.

That the nearer we are to Christ, we are the nearer to safety and peace.—While terror must for ever seize upon those that remain at a distance from him; peace is proclaimed to the trembling sinner who takes his station at the foot of his throne, ver. 5.

That it is the duty of Christians to soothe and comfort the awakened soul, when sincerely seeking and feeling after Christ.—Though he may be surrounded by fears, and alarmed at the “terrors of the Lord,” yet we are warranted to say to all who seek him in sincerity, “Fear not ye,” ver. 5.

That the death of Christ is matter of wonder and admiration to angels.—His glories were known, but his sufferings were mysterious.—The angel does not allude to the wonders of his miracles, the annunciation from heaven of his divinity and Sonship, the glories of his transfiguration, or the power of his resurrection; but he designates him “Jesus who was crucified,” ver. 5.

That they who sincerely seek Christ, will always succeed beyond their expectation.—The women sought a dead Christ, and found a living one; they sought an opportunity of honouring him, and were themselves blessed and benefited; and although they went out to find him with doubt and sorrow, they are enabled to return with satisfaction and joy, ver. 6.

That the Christian's sorrow is often caused, and is always aggravated, by losing sight of the promise.—Your Lord is not dead, but is “risen, as he said,” ver. 6.

That it is the duty of Christians frequently to think of the death and the resurrection of their Lord; the one as the last part of his humiliation, and the other as the first step of his exaltation, ver. 6.

That God, in consideration of man's weakness and unbelief, always gives him the most indubitable evi-

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ce on those things which are necessary to his salvation.—The angel did not merely announce to the men that Christ was risen; but that their faith might be completely secured, he invited them to behold the empty sepulchre. “Come, see the place where the Lord *lay*,” ver. 6.

the doctrine of Christ’s resurrection, as sustaining the character of our surety, should be frequently templated by us, as exhibiting a proof that his work was accepted by the Father, and that because he lives, we shall live also.—By this means, we will be “to know him, the power of his resurrection, the fellowship of his sufferings, and also be made conformable unto his death,” ver. 6.

Christians ought to endeavour to supply the deficiencies of each other, whether in regard to knowledge, or want of recollection.—“Go, and tell his disciples, that he is risen from the dead,” ver. 7.

we ought always to be willing, and ready, and diligent in every thing which is to promote the glory of God, or the spiritual good of our brethren, “Go quickly, and tell them,” ver. 7.

we ought diligently to attend upon the means of grace simply as pointed out to us by God.—Galilee the place where Christ is to be found; and they who wish to see him, must not seek him in Jerusalem, or at Jordan, but must repair to Galilee, where he they can expect to succeed, ver. 7.

a diligent and humble attendance upon the means of grace as appointed by God, will always prove successful in finding Christ. “There you shall find him,” ver. 7.

inattention in hearing, and negligence in remembering, the instructions and exhortations of Christ’s messengers, are common causes of disappointment and sorrow for unsuccessful searchings after him. “O! I have told you,” ver. 7.

the servants of Christ, in delivering his message and commands, are clothed with his authority.—The angel, as the messenger of God, speaks with certain-

ty, and with authority demands attention to his orders. "There *shall* ye see him; *lo*, *I* have told you," ver. 7.

That instant and cheerful obedience in prescribed duty, is the best evidence of sincerity in our profession. "They departed quickly," ver. 8.

That fear and joy are common inhabitants of the Christian's mind, and are not incompatible with each other.—A joyful wonder at the kindness and condescension of God to his people, will always produce in them a corresponding fear of offending him, ver. 8. That sincere love to God will make us zealous and active in the service of his people. "They *ran* to bring his disciples word," ver. 8.

That disinterested endeavours to serve our brethren, will produce benefits and blessings to ourselves.—While in the way to inform their brethren where Christ would be found, they themselves were favoured with an interview, ver. 9.

That the doctrine of the resurrection is fraught with joy and hope.—Christ's sufferings made the disciples sad; but having gained the victory, expiated sin, and satisfied divine justice, he now comes forth a conqueror, and proclaims to his followers, "All hail;" rejoice with me; I have vanquished your enemies, "be not afraid," ver. 9.

That every manifestation of Christ's love and care of his people, should lead them to renewed acts of adoration and praise, ver. 9.

That they who are in the path of duty, have at no time any cause of alarm.—Christ is their friend; and "if he be for us, who can be against us?" ver. 10.

That social duties, important truths, and precious promises, ought frequently to be called to our remembrance.—The angel had given them information, but Christ again repeats it, and again enjoins them to communicate it to others, ver. 10.

That those things which are calculated to give joy to the saint, cause dismay to the sinner.—The fact of Christ's resurrection is communicated by his friends

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with triumph, but by his enemies with terror, ver. 11.

That they who oppose the cause of salvation, will be among the first to know and to feel their own weakness, and the total destruction of their wicked plans, ver. 11.

That the crooked ways of deceit and fraud are more troublesome and expensive than the straight paths of truth and duty.—Bribes must be used to keep accessories silent,—lies must be invented to conceal the truth from those whom they would deceive, ver. 12.

That God will make even the counsels of the wicked the means of betraying them.—The soldiers were instructed to say, that the *disciples* came,—that they came *by night*,—that they stole a body *guarded by soldiers*,—a *company* of soldiers,—a company of *Roman* soldiers,—and that this happened at a time when the guard, contrary to their custom and duty, and at the peril of their lives, had *fallen asleep*,—and at the precise moment when they had *all* fallen asleep, without one to awaken the others;—and yet, though they slept, they pretend to know *when, how, and by whom* Christ was taken away;—all which affords one of the strongest arguments in evidence of Christ's resurrection, ver. 13.

That one deviation from truth will cause many more, in order to preserve its consistency.—The soldiers, by falsely saying that they had slept on their watch, had impeached themselves; but the governor must *again* be deceived, that they might escape, ver. 14.

That the love of money is the root of all evil.—The soldiers, under the terror of the angel's presence had, only a few hours before, shaken, and become as dead men; but now they banish their fears, defy God and sell their consciences for a little gold, ver. 15.

That fear and terror, though they may check sin, will never, without the influences of the Spirit of God, produce true repentance.—“If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe, though one rose from the dead,” ver. 15.

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repentance.—"If they believe the prophets, neither will they be
from the dead," ver. 15.

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That there is no story so absurd, as that it will not be believed by those who wish it to be true.—The absurd falsehoods of the soldiers are adopted as the best excuse for the cruelty and impiety of the Jews in Christ's death, and as the best and only argument against the truth of his doctrines, ver. 15.

SECTION. LII.

Christ appears to two Disciples going to Emmaus.

Luke xxiv. 13—35.

See also Mark xvi. 12.

NARRATIVE.

ON the same day that our Lord arose from the dead, he followed and overtook two of his disciples on their way to Emmaus, who did not know him at first, and to whom he explained from Scripture the necessity of his sufferings and death. Having been prevailed on to tarry with them for the night, he discovered himself to them during supper, and immediately vanished out of their sight. Upon this they rose up, and returned the same night to Jerusalem, and informed their brethren of what had happened.

EXERCISE.

Ver. 13. How many of the disciples went to Emmaus? When did they go to Emmaus? What was Emmaus? How far was Emmaus from Jerusalem?—14. How were they employed on the way? Of what did they talk?—15. Who drew near? What were they doing when Jesus drew near? To whom did Jesus draw near? What did Jesus do when he came to them?—16. What were holden? What was the consequence of their eyes being holden? Whom did they not know?—17. Who spoke to them? *What did he ask them concerning their communications?* When did they hold these communications with each other? In what state of mind were

they while holding these communications?—18. Who answered him? What did he suppose Jesus to be? What did he ask if he had not known? When had these things happened?—19. What did Jesus ask them? Concerning whom did they say these things had happened? What did they say Jesus was? In what did they say he was mighty? Before whom was he mighty?—20. Who delivered him up? For what purpose did they deliver him up? What had they done to him? Whom had they crucified?—21. What did they trust he would have done? How long was it since these things had happened?—22. Who had made them astonished? Where had the women been? When had they been at the sepulchre?—23. What had the women not found? What did the women see? What did the angels say?—24. Who went to the sepulchre? What did they find? Whom did they not see?—25. What did Jesus call them? To what were they slow? What were they slow of heart to believe?—26. What ought Christ to have done? What was to happen when he had suffered these things? Into what was he to enter? When was he to enter into his glory?—27. *What did he expound to them?* What prophet did he begin at? Concerning whom did these Scriptures speak?—28. To what did they draw nigh? Who drew nigh to the village? Who made as though he would have gone farther?—29. What did the two disciples do? Whom did they constrain? What did they say to Jesus? Why did they insist on him abiding with them? What did Jesus do?—30. Who took bread? When did he take bread? What did he do when he took bread? *What did he break?* *To whom did he give it?*—31. *What were opened?* *What was the consequence of their eyes being opened?* What became of Jesus?—32. What did they say turned within them? What made their heart burn within them? Where did he talk with them? What did he open to them?—33. What did they do that same hour? Whether did they return? Whom did they find gathered together?—34. Who did the eleven say was risen?

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To whom had he appeared?—35. Who told what things were done in the way? To whom did the two disciples tell this? How did they say he was made known to them?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 13. *Village*, A small town, or collection of houses.—*Threescore furlongs*, About seven miles.

15. *Communed*, Talked seriously.

16. *Their eyes were holden*, Christ miraculously prevented them from knowing him.

17. *Communications*, Subjects of conversation.—*Sad*, Sorry and melancholy.

19. *Mighty in deed and word*, Showed great power and wisdom in all that he did, and in every thing that he taught.

21. *Redeemed Israel*, Delivered Israel, the people of God, from the power of their enemies.

25. *Slow of heart to believe*, Backward to receive the truths which God, by the prophets, has revealed.

27. *Beginning at Moses, and all the prophets*, Beginning at the commencement of the Old Testament writings, or the five books of Moses, and then proceeding to the other prophetic writings in their order.—*Expounded*, Shewed the connection, and explained.

28. *Made as though he would have gone farther*, Bade them farewell, and was about to proceed forward on the road, when they stopped at the village.

29. *Constrained him*, Anxiously requested him.—*Far spent*, Near to a close.—*Tarry*, Abide for the night.

31. *Their eyes were opened*, Christ permitted them now to know him.—*Vanished*, Disappeared quickly.

32. *Burn within us*, Were greatly affected and delighted.

33. *The eleven*, The apostles, there being now only that number, Judas having hanged himself.

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn,
That mental depression should not prevent us from performing necessary duty.—The two disciples were

much grieved, but that did not hinder them from attending to their duties at Emmaus, ver. 13.

That a love for religious conversation is one mark of the sincere Christian.—“Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,” ver. 14.

That Christian sympathy, and mutual condolence are very beneficial in supporting us in trouble. “As iron sharpeneth iron, so doth a man the face of his friend,” ver. 14.

That God’s dealings with his church and servants, are proper subjects for his people’s discourse.—When these dealings are painful, mutual conversation will help to make them supportable, and even pleasant; and when doubtful and dark, it will tend to remove the mystery, and to strengthen each others faith in their wisdom and necessity, ver. 14.

That devout conversation regarding Christ, is a sure way of obtaining his presence and blessing.—While we speak, he will draw near, though we may not at the time be sensible of it, ver. 15.

That it is the duty of Christians not only to search the Scriptures, but to compare and contrast their several parts, for the better understanding of them.—The disciples not only *communed*, but “*reasoned*,” ver. 15.

That Christ is often present with his people at the very moment when they are mourning his absence.—It frequently happens that prejudice and unbelief “hold their eyes” from perceiving him, ver. 16.

That enquiry into cases of evident trouble or distress that may have happened to our neighbours, or even to strangers, should neither be considered impertinent nor intrusive, when it is accompanied with a real desire to alleviate or remove them, ver. 17.

That the interruption or intrusion of strangers should not be judged of uncharitably, or be hastily repelled or resented.—Had the disciples declined conversation with him whom they took to be a stranger, they would have lost much knowledge, as well as improvement, ver. 17, 18.

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That the ignorance of nominal Christians and false professors, is just cause of astonishment and regret to the pious Christian, ver. 18.

That all who are in reality ignorant of Christ, and his sufferings for sinners, are strangers to the gospel, ver. 18.

That asking what is already known, and allowing others to suppose us unacquainted with what we ask, is no dereliction of duty, or encroachment on truth. In order to communicate religious truths, it is not only proper, but necessary, frequently to require of others an explanation of those things which have been long familiar to ourselves, ver. 19.

That an intimate acquaintance with the extent of the knowledge, and of the particular views of those whom we intend to instruct, will greatly assist us in removing their prejudices, and in giving them correct views of the truth, ver. 19.

That a knowledge of Christ, and a belief in him as the messenger and Son of God, lie at the bottom of all true faith, ver. 19.

That the errors of ministers and teachers are great stumbling blocks, even to the true disciples of Christ, ver. 20.

That the wickedness of men, and the extent of their crimes in supporting their views, ought never to shake our faith in the declarations of Scripture, or make us swerve for a moment from the path of our duty, ver. 20.

That a trust in former frames and feelings, is a very insecure foundation on which to build our Christian comfort.—“We trusted,” but we trust no longer, ver. 21.

That ignorance and unbelief are the fruitful and common causes of a Christian’s uneasiness.—The disciples had forgotten part of the truths of Scripture, and were doubtful of the others, and therefore it was that they “walked, and were sad,” ver. 21.

That too great confidence in preconceived opinions,

especially when accompanied by strong prejudices, not only prevents our candidly *receiving* evidence, but unfits the mind also for *judging* of it.—The disciples were “astonished” at the narrative of the women, and misinterpreted the report of the apostles, because these could not correspond with their former ideas of Christ being the temporal redeemer of Israel, ver. 22, 23.

That want of faith is want of wisdom.—If the weak Christian is a fool, though only *slow of heart* to believe, how foolish are the wicked, who determine to continue in their unbelief! ver. 25.

That prejudices generally spring from ignorance, and are always strengthened by it.—A knowledge of the prophets, and an enlightened faith in their predictions, would have shewn the disciples the necessity of Christ's death, and a beautiful harmony in all that had happened, ver. 25.

That sufferings here are intended as preparatives to glory hereafter.—“Through much tribulation, we must enter into the kingdom,” ver. 26.

That a knowledge of the Old Testament is very useful, in enabling us properly to understand the things contained in the New.—The writings of Moses and the prophets are writings “concerning Christ,” ver. 27.

That the expounding of Scripture is not necessarily restricted to particular persons or places.—The *house*, or the *highway*, in certain circumstances, may have to supply the place of the *church*; and a *stranger* may be made the means of warming the hearts, and of enlightening the minds of the people of God, ver. 27.

That Christ, for the purpose of trying the faith and love of his people, and of exciting in them more ardent and spiritual desires, will sometimes appear as if about to deprive them of his ordinances.—In such cases we ought, by earnest supplications and entreaties, to constrain him to abide with us, ver. 28, 29.

That religious intercourse and conversation with godly men are always desirable to the friends of Christ.—

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"His delight is with the excellent of the earth," ver. 29.

That religion does not preclude attention either to temporal wants or comforts; such attention becomes unlawful only when it bears too near a proportion to the care and anxiety which we evince for the welfare of the soul, ver. 29.

That an evident inclination on the part of others to receive spiritual improvement, should always be met by as strong a desire to bestow it, ver. 29.

That an urgent and persevering application to Christ for his presence, and the illumination of his Spirit will assuredly be successful.—He "went in to sit with them," ver. 29.

That common acts may, by the Christian, be converted into pious exercises, ver. 30.

That pious conversation, and religious exercises, are best cures for spiritual blindness, ver. 31.

That unbelief in the promises, and dullness of comprehension in the things of God, are frequently visited afterwards by the hidings of his countenance.—The disciples had been culpably ignorant, and backward to receive evidence of the truth; they are now convinced, but they are, at the same moment, left to mourn the absence of their Lord, ver. 31.

That mutual communications with our Christian brethren, regarding our joys and our fears, our shortcomings and our failings in the divine life, should be frequent, if not regularly made, for our mutual comfort, and for promoting our edification and spiritual welfare, ver. 32.

That it is pleasing and comforting to recollect to mind instances of communion which we have enjoyed with Christ.—Jacob, on his death-bed, remembered with delight how the Lord had met with him, and blessed him at Bethel, ver. 32.

That our belief of the Scriptures give us joy and comfort, and excite in us admiration and gratitude to God, exactly in proportion as they are understood,

—Their hearts burned within them when he *opened* to them the Scriptures, ver. 32.

That we ought not to grudge being at some pains or trouble, when by it we can give ease or comfort to any of our Christian brethren.—The disciples were just off a journey ; it was now night, and they were at a considerable distance from Jerusalem ; yet, without waiting for rest or refreshment, they arose the same hour, and returned, for the purpose of informing their fellow-disciples of the truth of the resurrection, ver. 33.

That meetings for spiritual improvement among Christians, are times which God generally honours by delivering messages of mercy, and exhibiting instances of his favour and grace, ver. 33.

That in spiritual instruction, we ought to learn from the meanest of our brethren.—The eleven chosen apostles were cheered and comforted by the tidings of two private disciples, ver. 33.

That they who make exertions for the improvement of others, may expect to be benefited and comforted by those whom they intend to serve, ver. 34.

That sincere and deep repentance will always be acknowledged and honoured by God.—Peter's fall had been great, but his repentance was bitter and sincere ; and he is now honoured above the other apostles by being the first to whom his Lord appeared, ver. 34.

That former experiences should be used for the edification and comfort of our brethren as well as of ourselves, ver. 35.

SECTION LIII.

Christ appears at the Sea of Tiberias
John xxi. 1—17.

NARRATIVE.

WHILE all the apostles, except Thomas, were assembled together, and hearkening to the two disciples who had returned from Emmaus, and who were forming the others of what had taken place, Jesus himself appeared in the midst of them, (Luke xxiv. 36—John xx. 19—25.) Thomas, who had been absent, would not believe that Christ was risen; Christ, accordingly, appeared to the disciples again when Thomas was present, and gave him all the evidence of his resurrection which he had demanded, (Mark xvi. 14, and John 26—31.) At the command of Christ the disciples returned to Galilee, (See Matt. xxviii. 10;) and being now destitute of the means of support, some of them were obliged to engage in their former occupation fishing. In this, however, they were no sooner employed, than Christ appeared on the shore; but at first was not known by them. At his request they cast their net upon the right side of the ship, and enclosed an immense draught of fishes, and instantly recognised his power and presence of their Lord. He assembled them on the beach, ate in their presence, and conversed with them all; and particularly with Peter, the manner whose death he at that time foretold.

EXERCISE.

Veg. 1. To whom did Jesus shew himself? What did he shew himself?—2. Who were together?—3. Who resolved to go a-fishing? What did the others resolve to do? Into what did they enter? How did they spend that night?—4. Who stood on the shore? When did he stand on the shore? What did the disciples not know?—5. What did Jesus call them? What did he ask them? What answer did they give?—6. What did Jesus

them do ? What did he say would be the consequence of their doing so ? What did they do ? What were they not able to do ? Why could they not draw the net ?—7. Who spoke to Peter ? What did he say ? What did Peter then do ? Where did he cast himself ?—8. How did the other disciples come ? How far were they from land ? What did they drag ?—9. *What did they see on shore ?* When did they see this fire ? What was on the fire ? What else was there besides fish ?—10. What did Jesus bid them bring ? Who were to bring the fish ? What fish were they to bring ?—11. Who drew the net to land ? Of what was it full ? How many fishes were in it ? What was not broken ?—12. What did Jesus invite the disciples to do ? What durst the disciples not do ? Why did they not ask him ?—13. What did Jesus take ? What did he give them ? What else did he give them ?—14. After what did Jesus shew himself to his disciples ? How often had Jesus shewed himself to his disciples ?—15. *What did Jesus ask at Simon Peter ?* When did he ask this question ? What did Peter say ? What did he say that the Lord knew ? What did Jesus bid him feed ?—16. What did Jesus again ask at Peter ? What answer did Peter return ? What did he say that his Lord knew ? What did Jesus bid him feed ?—17. What did Jesus say to Peter the third time ? What grieved Peter ? What did Peter say the Lord knew ? What did Jesus bid him feed ?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 3. *A-fishing*, To catch fish.

6. *Ye shall find*, Ye shall procure fish for food.—*Multitude*, Great number.

8. *Two hundred cubits*, About one hundred yards.

15. *Feed my lambs*, Instruct and comfort the young or weak, and feeble members of my church.

16. *Grieved*, Very sorry.

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn,
That repeated manifestations of Christ's love and favour, are necessary to the Christian while on earth.

He is so encompassed by worldly objects, and drawn away by worldly cares, that regular and frequent religious exercises are requisite to keep his mind fixed on God, and the things of eternity, ver. 1.

That when we wait for Christ, it is good for us to wait in company with our brethren. Christ had appointed the disciples to meet him in Galilee, and now that "two or three are gathered together in his name, he is found in the midst of them," ver. 2.

That worldly occupations are part of our Christian duties. They waited for Christ, but they would not be idle; they were probably in want, and would labour with their hands for that which was good, ver. 3.

That good advice and good example should be readily followed. Peter suggests the propriety of labour, and the other disciples at once accede to it, ver. 3.

That we ought never to delay the performance of an duty, which is at present in our power. The disciples entered *immediately* into a ship to execute their purpose, ver. 3.

That we ought not to be discouraged when in the performance of duty, expected success may either be delayed, or totally denied. Want of success in their fishing excursion, prepared the minds of the disciples for a farther display of the Lord's power and goodness, ver. 3.

That a pious and patient perseverance in secular duties though amidst trying circumstances and discouragements, will, by the blessing of God, tend to spiritual improvement. The disciples saw it to be their duty to labour,—they were unsuccessful; but by a patient continuance at their post, their Lord was found, and their labours were at last made successful, ver. 4.

That the cares and the toils of the world, have a tendency to darken our spiritual discernment, as well as to weaken our relish for spiritual objects, ver. 4.

That though God has provided liberally for the *spiritual* wants of his people, yet he is pleased for wise reasons

to permit them sometimes to feel the want, and to suffer the loss of many temporal comforts, ver. 5.

That while Christ is most desirous for the spiritual welfare of his people, he is neither improvident, nor unamindful of their temporal wants. They may not enjoy the luxuries, or even the comforts of life, but they shall at all times be taken care of by him, and fed with the food convenient for them, ver. 5.

That in times of privation or distress, the Lord will make a way of escape. They who had no meat, and after long toil had been still unsuccessful in procuring it, are by their Lord at last directed where and how it is to be found, ver. 6.

That implicit obedience to the directions of Christ, is the soonest and surest way to success.—They who follow their own courses will be able to catch nothing; while they who submit to the teaching which is from above, will be successful beyond their hopes, ver. 6.

That even the greatest success in our worldly occupations, is attended with toil, and care, and uneasiness.—The draught was so great, that *they could not draw it*—Let us seek the possession of that “which maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow,” ver. 6.

That we should always be alive to the presence of Christ.—Prosperity or success, health or sickness, pleasure or pain, are equally of his appointment; and we should accustom ourselves to see him in them all, ver. 7.

That Christ himself is always to be preferred to his gifts.—The gratitude of Peter for his Lord's forgiveness of his crime, made him forget the fishes he had bestowed, and the sea which divided them, in order that he might shew the sense he entertained of his mercy, ver. 7.

That love to Christ is generally most quick and correct in discerning our duty, though zeal is generally firm in attempting its performance.—John's love made him the first to discover our Lord, but Peter's zeal made him first reach him, ver. 7.

That one duty ought never to be allowed to interrupt

the young and the ignorant; and if they have, ought to shew their love to him by "feedir lambs," ver. 15.

That in spiritual enquiries and self-examination, gent, and strict, and repeated investigations to be made.—The soul is at stake; and an error may be an eternal loss, ver. 16, 17.

That though strict examination into our state m grievous, it is yet profitable.—Peter grieved, b Lord knew best how to probe the wound whi intended to heal, ver. 17.

SECTION LIV.

Christ's Ascension.—Acts i. 1—11.

See also Matt. xxviii. 18. Mark xvi. 15. and L xxiv. 44.

NARRATIVE.

OUR Lord having appeared at different times veral of his disciples, and particularly, at one to about five hundred, (Matt. xxviii. 16, 17. Ac 1 Cor. xv. 6.) he at last, about forty days after h surrection, led his disciples out to the Mount of (where he gave them his final instructions, and up his hands and blessed them. He was then rated from them,—rose into the air,—and bei ceived by a cloud out of their sight, ascended t ven, where he will remain till the end of all thin,

EXERCISE.

Ver. 1. Of whom did the former treatise s What did it record about Jesus?—2. Who was up? What had he given? To whom had he commandments? Through whom did he give commandments?—3. To whom did he shew h alive? After what did he shew himself alive? B,

kind of proofs did he shew himself alive? For how long was Jesus seen after his crucifixion? Of what did he speak during these forty days?—4. With whom was he assembled? *What did he command them to do?* For what were they to wait? For whose promise were they to wait? From whom had they heard of that promise?—5. With what did John baptize? With what were they to be baptized? When were they to be baptized with the Holy Ghost?—6. At whom did the apostles ask? About the restoring of what did they ask? To whom did they expect that the kingdom was to be restored? When did the apostles ask this question?—7. Who returned them an answer to this? What was it not for them to know? What had the Father done as to the times and seasons? In whose power are the times and seasons?—8. What was to come upon them? What were they to receive after the Holy Ghost came upon them? What were they to be? Where were they to be witnesses? Unto what parts of the earth were they to be witnesses?—9. *What happened after he had spoken these things?* What were the disciples doing while he was taken up? What did the cloud do? What received him?—10. To what were the disciples looking? How did they look toward heaven? At what time did they look toward heaven? Who stood by them? How were they clothed?—11. To whom did the angels speak? *What did they ask the disciples?* Whither were they gazing? What did they say had become of Jesus? Who did they say should come? In what manner was he to come?

EXPLANATIONS.

Ver. 1. *Treatise*, A written discourse; a book written upon a particular subject.

2. *Taken up*, Ascended to heaven.—*Apostles*, Messengers; teachers chosen for the purpose of carrying the gospel to every part of the world

3. *Passion*, Sufferings.—*Infallible proofs*, Proofs which cannot be denied.—*Pertaining*, Belonging.

4. *Hence*, From this time.

6. *Restore*, Give back.
 8. *Uttermost*, Farthest.
 10. *Steadfastly*, With fixed attention.—*In white apparel*, Clothed in white robes.
 11. *Gazing*, Looking earnestly.

LESSONS.

From this Section we learn,

- That the great concern of Christians, for themselves and others, ought to be about the interests of the soul and eternity, ver. 1.
 That it is proper to commit to writing, for the benefit of others, accounts of the remarkable doings of the Lord, either in providence or grace.—As all men are concerned in what the Lord does for his church, so his interpositions in her behalf should not merely be disseminated as wide as possible, but also handed down to the generations to come, ver. 1.
 That the life of Christ, from his early years till his ascension, was an uniform scene of instructions and duty, ver. 2.
 That the writings of the apostles are sanctioned by the authority of Christ himself.—He chose them, and gave them commandment, what, where, and how to teach, ver. 2.
 That the evidence of Christ's resurrection is placed beyond dispute.—He was *seen alive* after he arose,—he was seen by *many*,—he was seen *for a long period*, (forty days,)—he was *conversed with*,—and he *gave instructions* anent the kingdom of his Father, ver. 3.
 That the conversation of Christians ought to be religious.—If Christ, after he had risen from the dead, spake only of divine things, what a high privilege, as well as duty, ought all to consider such discourse, and how much pleasure ought they to take in strengthening one another, as no one knows how soon he may be called home to his Father, ver. 3.
 That social meetings, for religious purposes, may expect the special blessing and presence of Christ, ver. 4.

That the blessings of salvation are often neither conferred at once, nor at the time we think best.—God alone knoweth the times and the seasons, for the manifestations of his grace, ver. 4.

That while the promises of God are to be implicitly relied upon, it is our duty particularly and diligently to watch and wait for their accomplishment, ver. 4.

That the promises of God are to be heard of only by and through the Lord Jesus Christ.—He is the only Mediator, the alone channel of communication between sinful man and his Maker, ver. 4.

That the sacraments are but outward signs of spiritual graces.—Baptism by water is but a means to an end, and points out the effectual and purifying influences of the Holy Ghost, ver. 5.

That worldly thoughts and desires ought always to be guarded against in religious assemblies, ver. 6.

That when our opportunities of spiritual improvement are short and few, we ought to be the more cautious not to misimprove them, ver. 6.

That ignorance of the divine purposes with respect to their temporal concerns, is to the people of God a real blessing.—Present duty is ours; and that duty is most pleasantly performed, when the care of futurity is cast wholly upon God, ver. 7.

That all things happen by the permission and appointment of God.—The times and the seasons are all in his power, ver. 7.

That spiritual power and grace are the gifts of God, communicated to his people by the influences of the Holy Spirit, ver. 8.

That the evidence of spiritual power is a steady and consistent witnessing for Christ, ver. 8.

That the religion of Christ is to be the religion of the world.—It shall not be confined to the Jews, or their neighbours, but shall extend, by the preaching of his servants, to the ends of the earth, ver. 8.

That Christ never leaves his work till it is finished.—It was not till he finished his instructions that he was parted from them, ver. 9.

That the glory of Christ should be matter of holy and joyful contemplation to all his people, ver. 9.

That Christians must now live by faith, and not by sight.—Christ has been taken up, and his presence with his people can only be realized by faith, ver. 9.

That the desires of the Christian will always be directed to Christ in heaven.—He has gone before to prepare mansions for their reception, and they will always cherish “a desire to depart and to be with Christ,” ver. 10.

That though Christ is personally removed, yet his ministering spirits are always at hand for the support and the comfort of his people, ver. 10.

That our desires after heaven, must not interfere to prevent the duties which are incumbent on us in life, ver. 11.

That the ascension of Christ to heaven, should be to us a pledge of his future coming to judgment.—The same Jesus who then ascended shall again descend, for the comfort of his saints, and the confusion of his enemies, ver. 11.

That Jesus Christ shall judge the world at last in his human nature.—He whose bodily presence was removed from his people, shall in the same body return for their acquittal and triumph, ver. 11.

THE END.

N. B.—A “*Help to the Acts of the Apostles*” is preparing for press, on a principle similar to the “*Help to the Gospels*,” but so arranged in its Exercises, &c. as to form a useful introduction to the successful teaching of the Epistles to the young.





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